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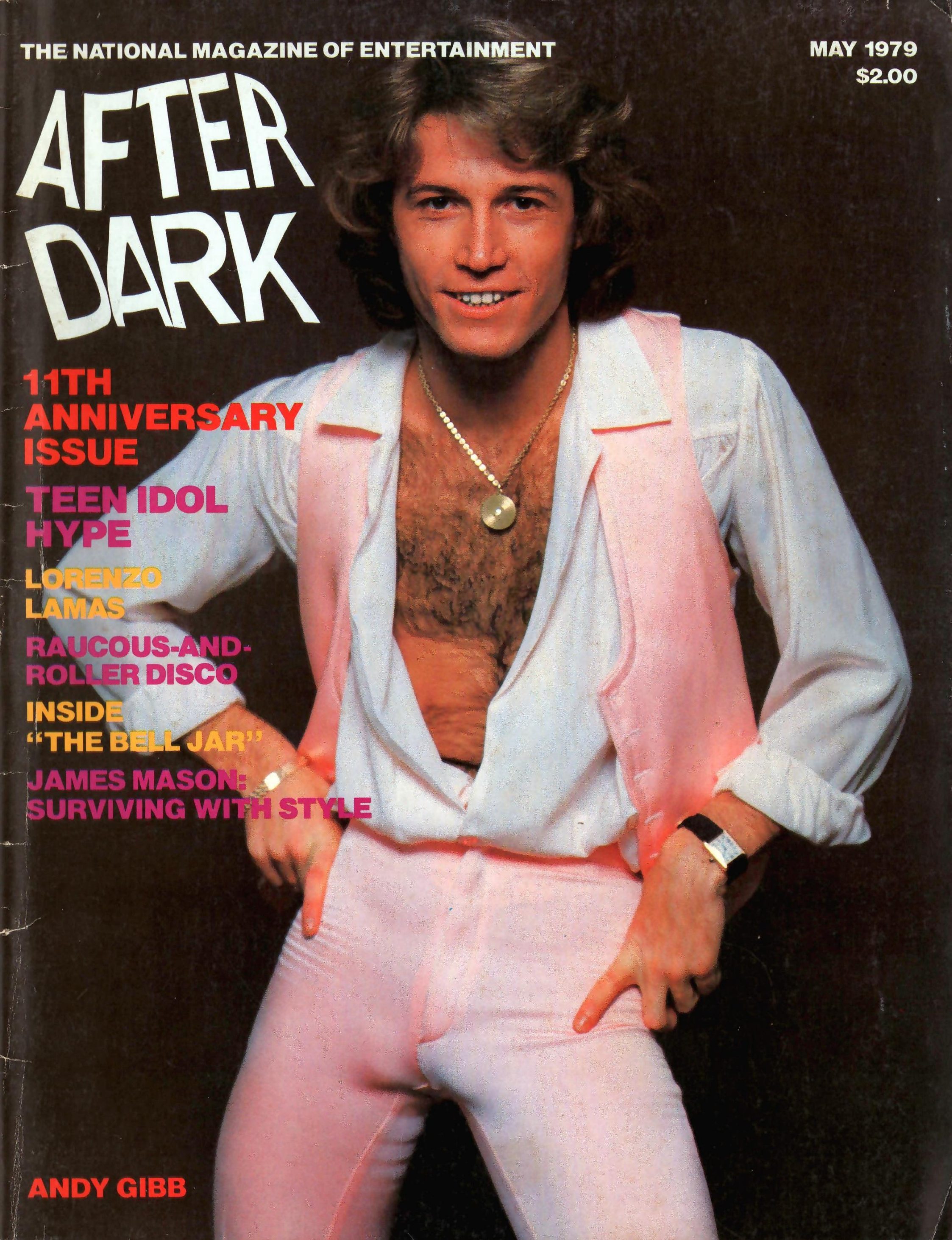

11TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

TEEN IDOL HYPE

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INSIDE "THE BELL JAR"

JAMES MASON: SURVIVING WITH STYLE

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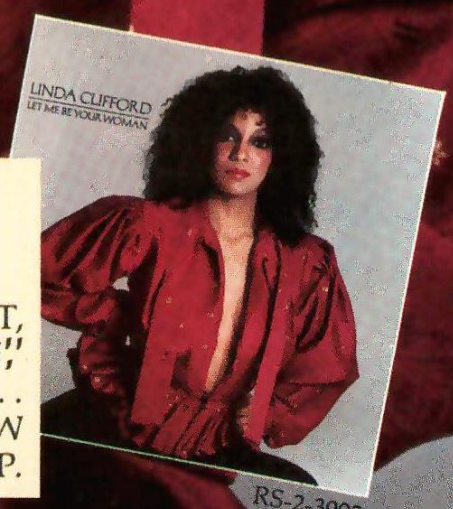

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ON THE COVER:
Slender hips, sensitive eyes, an ingratiating manner, a vibrating pelvis, influential siblings: Andy Gibb has all the ingredients for that sugar-spun concoction called the Teen Dream. Michael Musto describes the force behind the pretty-boy mania, and lists some of the other wind-up doll babies who qualify for pubescent adulation in an article beginning on page 33. It is preceded by Chris Huizenga's essay on a different set of teen stars—adolescent bodybuilders. (Photo by Lynn Goldsmith)

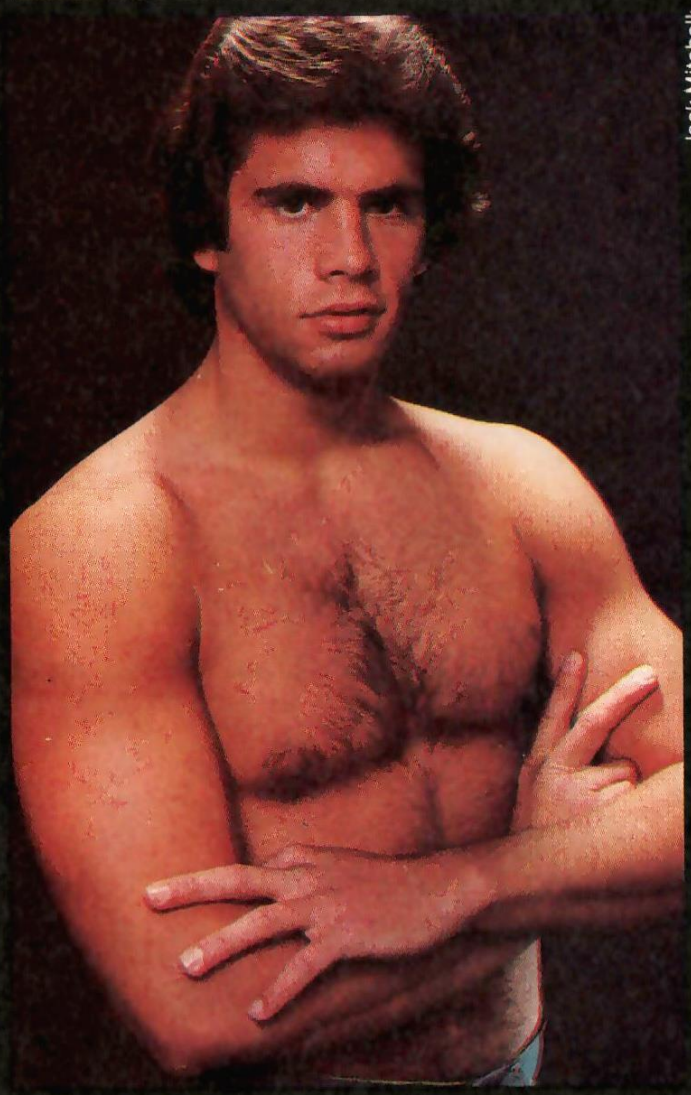
IN THIS ISSUE:

EDITORIAL:
10 Speaking Out

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS:
7 Broadway Buzz
12 Behind Both Screens
14 Art Scene
18 After Dark People

CITYSCAPES:
14 Los Angeles
17 San Francisco
19 Las Vegas
20 Toronto

REVIEWS:
22 Theater
26 Films
90 Recordings
92 TV Spotlight
93 Clubs & Concerts
95 Dining Out
98 Highlights


Jack Mitchell

With a new John Travolta being hyped into the media machine each week, handsome and dark-haired Lorenzo Lamas is grist for a publicist's mill, especially since his famous parents are Fernando Lamas and the visible, if unmotherly, Arlene Dahl. However, in Norma McLain Stoop's interview with the young star of the film Take Down *(beginning on page 48), Lamas emerges as a down-to-earth, level-headed boy-next-door, who remains unaffected by his recent windfall of celebrity and fortune.*

FEATURES:

30 TEEN IDOLS: PACKAGING THE BOY-NEXT-DOOR by Michael Musto
36 THE PUMP-HOUSE BOYS by Chris Huizenga
42 FASHION: SPRINGING THE TRENDY-TRADITIONAL LOOK by Jason Thomas
48 LORENZO LAMAS: JOCK OF ALL TRADES by Norma McLain Stoop
54 RAUCOUS AND ROLLER DISCO: MORE THAN DANCING by Patrick Pacheco
62 PHILIP ANGLIM: THE ELEPHANT MAN GIRDS HIS LOINS by John Gruen
66 CINEMATIC THEATER: "THE UMBRELLAS OF CHERBOURG" ON STAGE by Nathan Fain
70 JAMES MASON: ODD MAN IN by Brant Mewborn
74 MARILYN HASSETT: THE UPBEAT SIDE OF A TRAGIC TYPE by Norma McLain Stoop
76 SYLVIA PLATH: LIVING A DEATH POEM by Harvey Elliott

Volume 12 No. 1 May 1979
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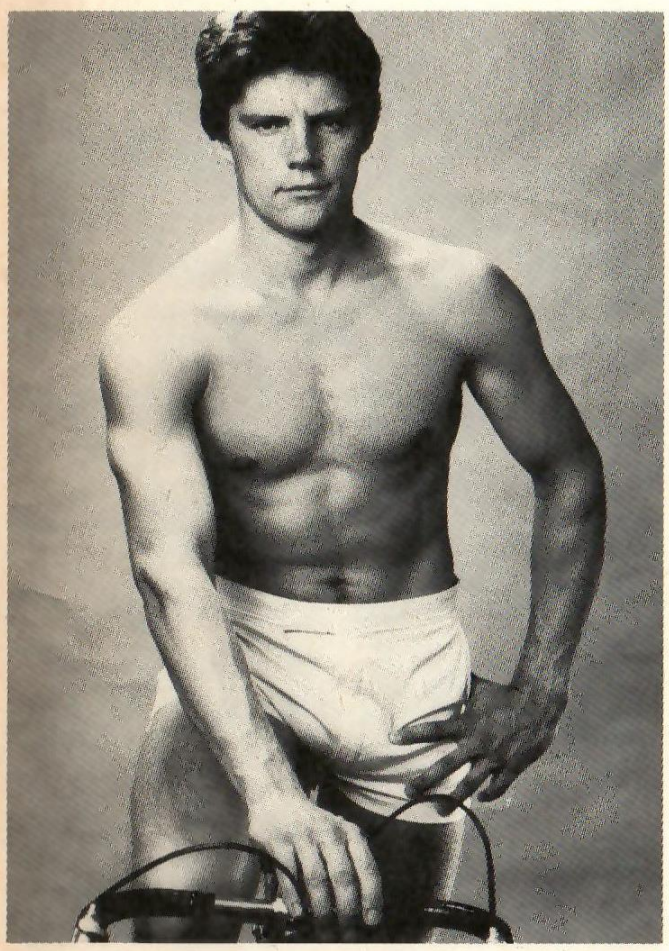
WHAT'S IN THE NEWS: Broadway Buzz

by Brant Mewborn

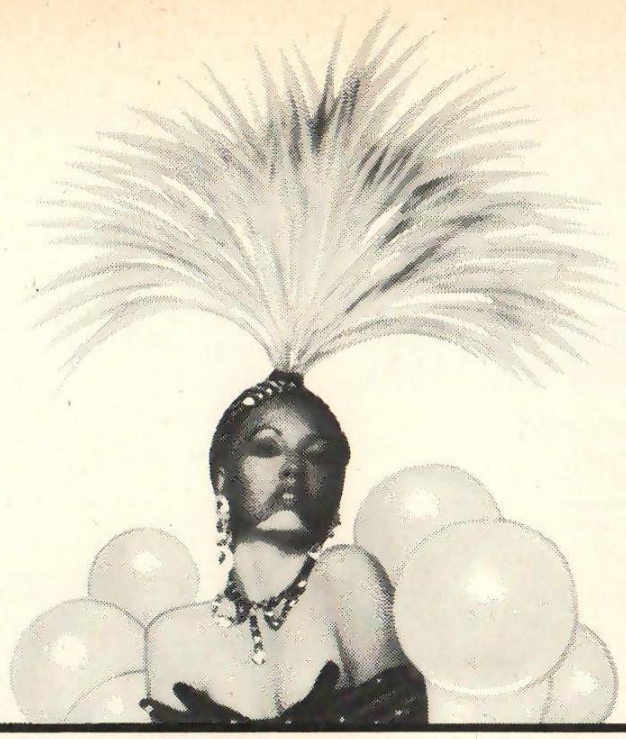
Murder à la Kitsch

Neil Simon checked three couples into the Beverly Hills Hotel for the marital melodramas of *California Suite*. Ron Clark and Sam Bobrick have been somewhat less discriminating in their choice of hotel accommodations for the comic mayhem in their new play, *Murder at the Howard Johnson's*, which opens on Broadway in mid-May. The story takes place in a midwestern Howard Johnson's where the garish orange-and-blue designs of that monument to American kitsch are the backdrop for the unstable designs of a man, his wife, and her lover to eliminate the odd man out of their triangle's shifting alliances—husband and wife against lover, wife and lover against husband, lover and husband against wife. Played by Tony Roberts, Marcia Rodd, and Bob Dishy, these three characters parry through three acts which are so reminiscent of story theater sketches that Paul Sills, of story theater and Second City renown, decided to return to Broadway after an eight-year absence and direct the show. But whether Broadway appreciates the effort or not. *Murder at the Howard John-*

Jack Mitchell



Ernest Thompson, who was featured in a cover story in the Mar. '77 issue of After Dark *as a fast-rising young actor in theater and television, surprised almost everyone by writing* On Golden Pond, *the delightful comedy at the New Apollo Theatre. Featuring dazzling performances by Frances Sternhagen and Tom Aldredge, the bucolic production has been directed by Craig Anderson, artistic director of the Hudson Guild Theatre, where* On Golden Pond *was showcased last fall.*



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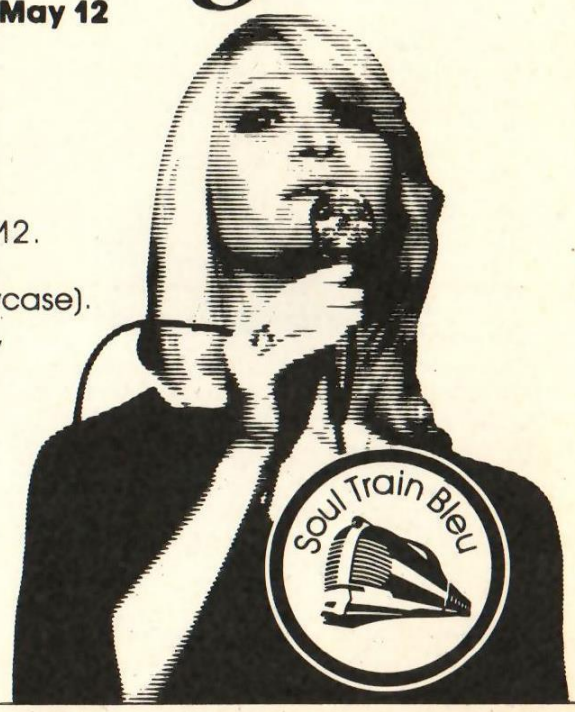

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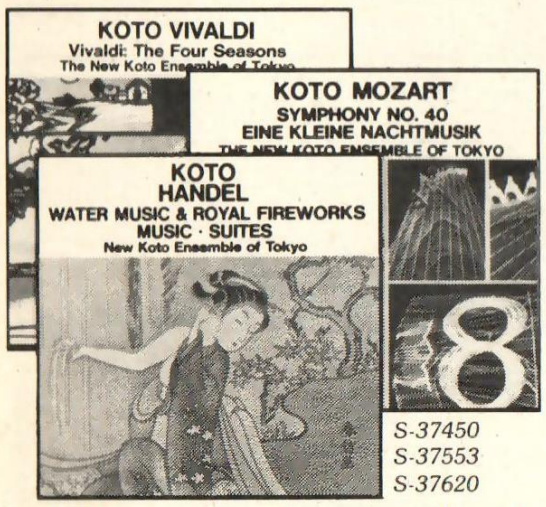

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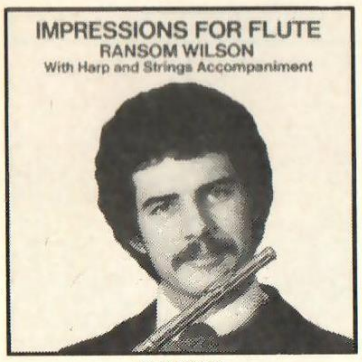

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Would-Be Sondheims, Attention!

While most theater-lovers woefully wag their heads, lamenting the high mortality rate of musicals today and lionizing our past songwriters in revues of souped-up nostalgia, the people at Playwrights Horizons on 42nd Street are hustling up some hope for the future of musical comedy. They know that breaking into show business is a frustrating Catch-22 proposition, especially for writers who have fewer forums for "auditions" than performers. So, since its beginning eight years ago as a noncommercial workshop for playwrights, the theater has launched such

(continued on p. 12)

Doug Young

One of the most enchanting parties New York has seen in recent years was the post-premiere bash for Milos Forman's Hair, *the splendid film produced by Lester Persky and Michael Butler. The elegantly dressed and star-studded crowd mingled in a bucolic fantasy awash with trees and flowers, linen and china, and buffets and bars which splashed with spirits and the finest champagne. While guests dined on sumptuous fare or danced in a laser-beaming disco,* After Dark's *Bill Como visited with Melba Moore (featured in both the stage and film productions of* Hair*), and Jorge Donn of Maurice Béjart's company (top); and Norma McLain Stoop chatted with Ron Alexander, John Curry, and Brian Grant (above), skaters in Curry's* Ice Dancing *which tours throughout the U.S. this summer.*

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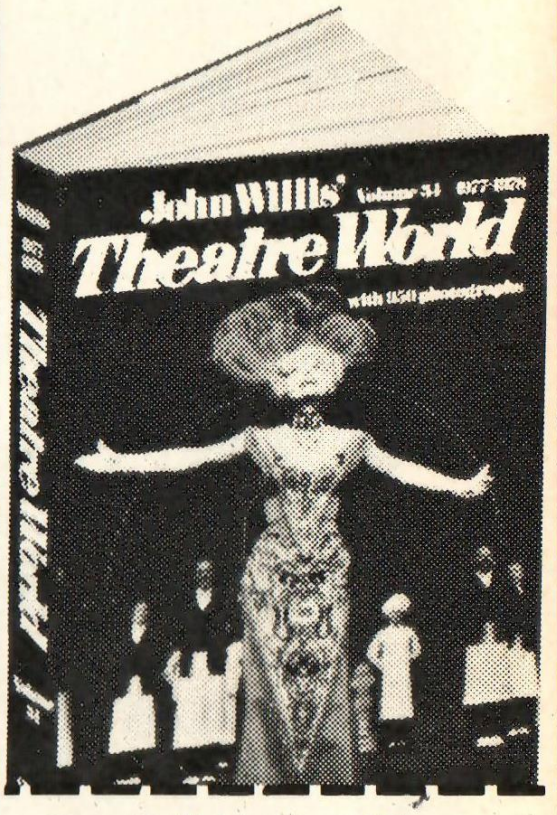

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SPEAKING OUT

by William Como

Herb Ritts

Suddenly it's May again and *After Dark* is another year older—11 this month. May is traditionally a time of change. With spring, each year, comes a new impetus in life, a surging force that sweeps us like a high wind.

One has only to look around at the faces of youth to realize how much the world has changed in a decade. Consider the teen idol of the 1960s. He was a studied symbol of innocence, unwashed and unkempt, long-haired, fashionably half-starved, and hung around the neck with "love beads" like a tawdry Rajah's ransom. Compare this apparition from the past with the flesh and blood reality of the present—as we see them in the teen muscle and teen idol features in this issue.

The pendulum has swung to its fullest, and now we are in the exhibitionistic era of narcissism. Instead of self-denial and a fixation with the mind alone (to the denigration of the body), this generation is exalting the self in the antique Greek idea of a whole mind in a whole body.

The turning point came as so many things come: from a fad—the health food binge. When it came in, the drug scene retreated into the background, leaving front-stage, center, the new idol. Instead of basement cafes and pallets in squalid rooms, the new generation took to the outdoors—and let the sunshine in.

With the swing of the pendulum eventually comes excess. No one can tell at this moment where the idolization will carry us. Invariably, revolutions in thought, in fashion, and in art and social behavior come out of satiety. As nature hates a vacuum, so there is something constitutional in the human being that drives him to upset the status quo. Already there are arguments, as many con as pro, on the new cult of narcissism. Will the current preoccupation with the physical result in a revulsion against the oh, so beautiful flesh? Will the sleek musculature of today's idol once again yield to the artfully attenuated face and form of the last decade? Yet, as history tells us, it is not so much in a pendulum swing as it is in the spiral of a cycle that society adopts successive fads.

But, *now* it is the time of today's teen idol, and yesterday's idols are gone, all gone with the winds of change.

William Cambra of California, one of the Mr. Teenage America contestants in a Gold's Gym competition held last fall, exults in an exhibitionism that is the keynote of this generation's "Song of Myself."

Young, attractive, but with a formidable talent that may almost disqualify him, Andrew Stevens is a prime candidate for Teenage Idol, that dubious honor bestowed by each succeeding generation of pubescent girls upon heartthrobs that meet their arbitrary criteria. (Photo by Michael Childers/Sygma)

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(continued from p. 8)

hits as Albert Innaurato's *Gemini*, Jack Heifner's *Vanities*, and Robert Patrick's *Kennedy's Children*. Now, a new Playwrights Horizons series called "Say It With Music" focuses on developing the work of new songwriters for musical theater.

Kenn Duncan

Donna King (erroneously identified as Donna Pescow in the Viva! Viva! *feature in* After Dark*'s Mar. '79 issue) is a triple threat of beauty, brains, and talent and is one of the reasons why* The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas *is thriving potently in its second year at the 46th Street Theatre.*

A couple of months ago, the program kicked off to a successful start with newcomer William Finn's *In Trousers*, a wry, intricately melodic "musical tableaux" about mental costumes—among other intimate/alien things. Hot on *Trousers*' heels were evenings with orchestrator-composer Jonathan Tunick and then songwriter Josh Rubins. Carol Hall, who is currently represented on Broadway by her lyrics and music for *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, will conclude the season with a new theater piece, from May 17 to May 24.

Hungry and as-yet-unheard songwriters should take note of this brave new institution. You don't have to be a protègé of, say, Oscar Hammerstein, Jr., or even Stephen Sondheim, to get a sympathetic ear on 42nd Street.

Behind Both Screens

The Weir Wave

Young Australian film director Peter Weir's one-two punch, *The Last Wave* and *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, hitting the United States one after the other, has established him with startling speed as a filmmaker to be reckoned with. His sense of the eerie communicates itself instantly to the viewer and, though one

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film is set in the present and one in the past, each deals in dream: a product of all time. For such a difficult undertaking to be convincing, Weir realized that casting was of the essence. For *The Last Wave,* he sought the help of Lance Bennett, director of Australia's Aboriginal Culture Foundation. "Not culture in the sense of enlightenment," Weir explains, "but in the sense of what we might call religion, which, for the aboriginals, is all things. For them, all things are bound together. There are no compartments. There is no such thing as acting; the performance of dances, the telling of tales are part of their way of life."

It was through Bennett that Weir found Nanjiwarra Amagula, who is a magistrate on his island, a tribal elder and on many aboriginal councils, to play the key role of Charlie, a sort of inscrutable saint. Though many city men have wonderful faces, he wanted a tribal man because "I though the inner quality was imperative. Which leads," he says earnestly, "to the question, 'What can the camera record? Can it record an inner quality? Can it pick it up)' In *Picnic at Hanging Rock* I made a terrible casting mistake. I made a test on a girl who had the inner quality, but the camera couldn't give it to me, so I cast another girl, who had the *external* quality, because *her* camera test imbued her with the quality, and the other girl, who ended up in a small role," he adds regretfully, "was the *real* Miranda.

"Lance Bennett," he detours to *The Last Wave,* "was extremely suspicious of me because I was just back from L.A., and sort of knocking at his door saying, 'Can I have a piece of the culture for awhile?' But he led me to Nanjiwarra, who was on a beach, rehearsing some dancers headed for a tribal dance festival in Nigeria. We sat together all day, not exchanging a word, and suddenly Nanjiwarra turned to me and asked, 'Can I bring my wife? Would that be too much to ask?', and I knew I'd passed the test. I still guess at the reason he accepted, but I think he saw this as a chance to speak to the world. He asked particularly, 'Will this film go to New York?' I think he saw it as a time capsule in which to leave a message about the inner life. So much is written and photographed about the dramatic externals: spear-throwing, fire-lighting. And the inner life is scarcely spoken of. In English, anyway," Peter Weir says thoughtfully.

Young Australian film director Peter Weir has risen to international prominence on the strength of his one-two punch with Picnic at Hanging Rock *and* The Last Wave.

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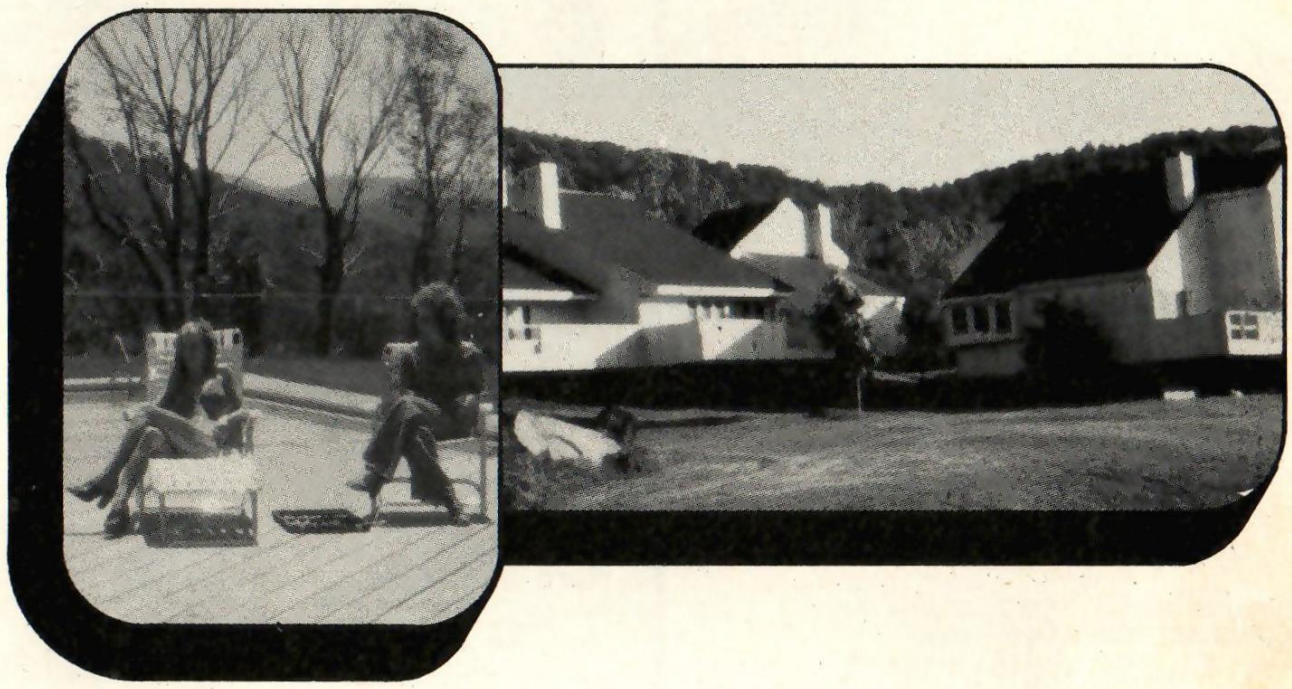

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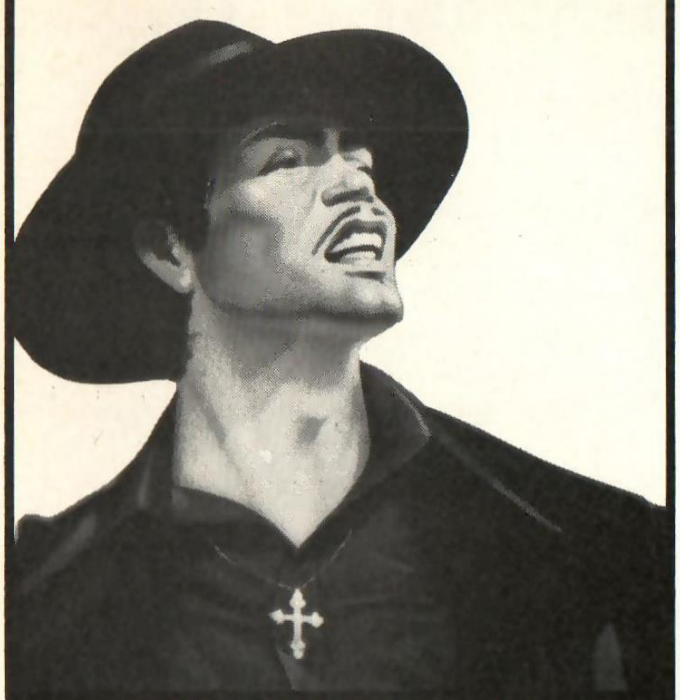

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Art Scene

Ruth Orkin's 1950 photograph taken of Ethel Waters, Carson McCullers, and Julie Harris at the opening night party for A Member of the Wedding *is among the 150 works being exhibited at the Lee Witkin Gallery in a tribute to artists who have been involved with the gallery since its inception in 1969.* A Ten Year Salute *continues through May 5.*

CITYSCAPES: Los Angeles

by Viola Hegyi Swisher

Dressing Room Gossip

Wishful thinking, maybe, but Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Wagner might yet, one of these days, make a deal for a dual L.A. stage debut —if they find a vehicle that would be right for both Natalie Wood and R.J.

On the Universal lot, adjacent to a chic Paris restaurant set for *Concorde—Airport '79*, Robert Wagner's persuasive presence lent his sound stage trailer-dressing room an easy, relaxed atmosphere. As modestly as if he weren't half of a film-famed pair, R.J. speculated lightly on the prospect of a stage production for the duo. Said he, "My wife's on the Ahmanson Center Theater Group board of directors, you know." To bring off such a *coup de théâtre*, even better than knowing the right people is *being* the right people. What a blast Natalie and Robert Wagner would be for any theater box office in the nation.

Meanwhile, the latter pinpointed the key to the character he plays in *Concorde—Airport '79*, in which he stars with the plane, Alain Delon, Susan Blakely, Sylvia Kristel, and George Kennedy. "I don't play the heavy aspect of this tycoon. He's not a twirl-your-mustache kind of heavy, but an extremely vulnerable man who believes in what he's doing, and is very much in love with the girl he feels he must destroy."

Gleanings from Truffaut

At an American Film Institute pre-retrospective press conference made doubly delightful by Yale professor Annette Insdorf translating, brilliant French director Francois Truf-

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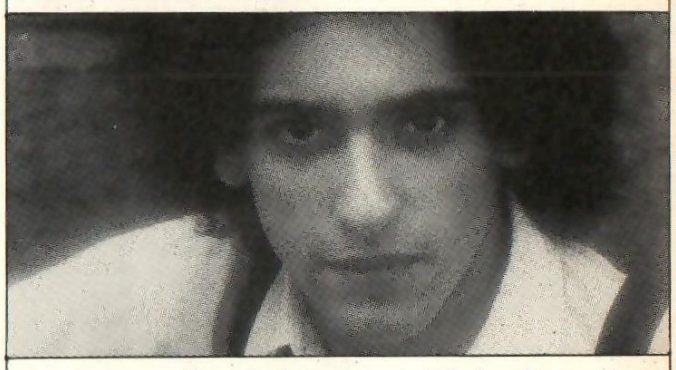

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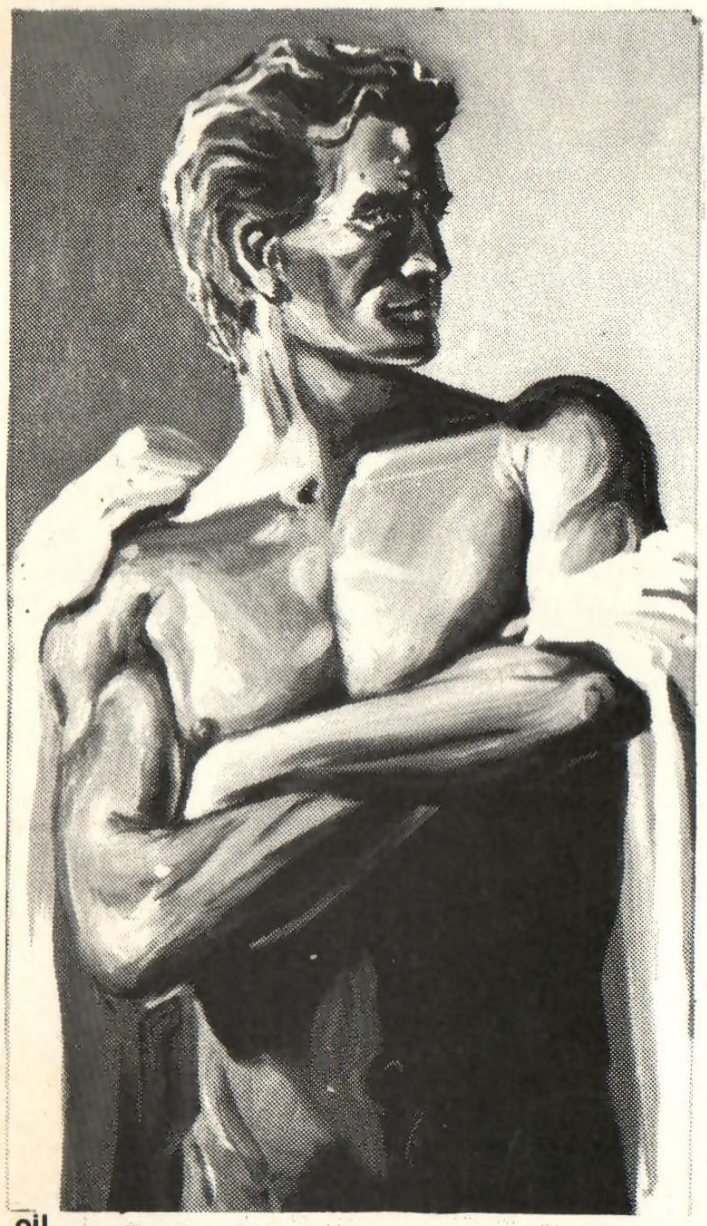

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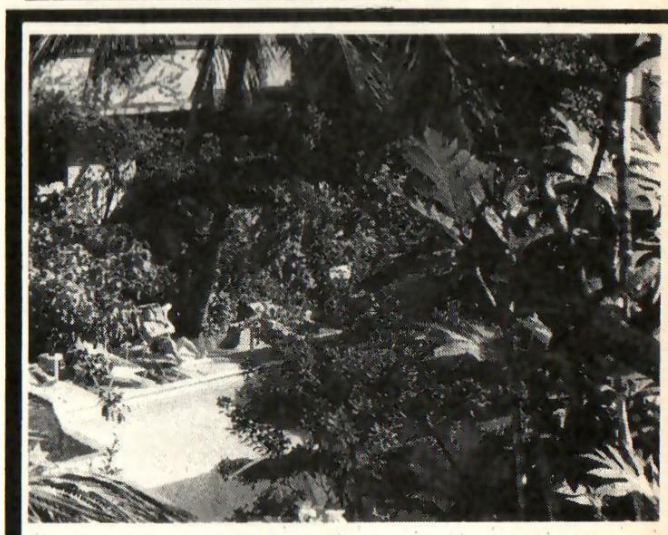

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faut said: "I love *stories* . . . I find it more interesting to describe the things that don't work than those that do . . . Hitchcock is haunted by a fear of boring the audience. He's interested only in situations . . . In America, I was offered to direct Barbra Streisand in *Colette*. I refused—because I want to be able to go back to France . . . In a Lubitsch film, the laughter of the audience is part of the soundtrack of the film."

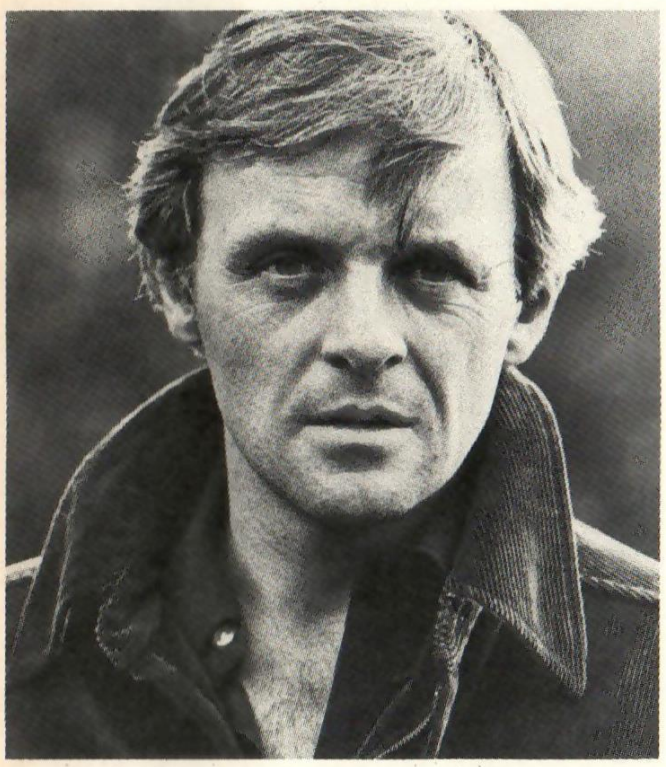
Beverly Hills Carny

Fiorucci's carnival of confetti people colored the Beverly Hills night scene all too briefly, though it went on and on till dawn threatened. Bette Midler, in a tailored gray jacket, eclipsed the shiniest sparklers and sequins. Her hair (blonde), in two Gretchen braids pulled tight atop her head, formed a coronet for the queen of entertainers who brought her powerhouse touch of reality to the superstyled setting. Glimpsed among the revelers: vivid Toni Basil, TV interviewer Paul Ryan, and designer James Reva. At a Fiorucci carnival smash bash like this, merchandise is banished to some secret cavern of the one-time movie palace-turned-chic shop. Nothing's for sale. Officially. It's all free-form fun.

About Whatever Wherever

Butterfly Records' president A.J. Cervantes at a celebration for St. Tropez' *Belle de Jour* album promised disco music will be good for at least another 10 years. "After that," he said, "who knows? That's a question asked since the '20s. Only then, it was, 'Where can you go from ragtime?' "

In a brief exchange before opening at Plaza Four, Bobby Short laughed at the tag, "Last of the Great Saloon Singers." He'd just come from a major hotel's big room and his next stop was Kennedy Center. "It's been a long, happy ride," said the supreme keyboard entertainer who started big in the early '40s. Reaching to define saloon material, he came up with, "Well, it has a funky familiarity."



Anthony Hopkins appears as Prospero in the Mark Taper Forum production of Shakespeare's The Tempest, *directed by Canadian John Hirsch. The production opens May 16.*

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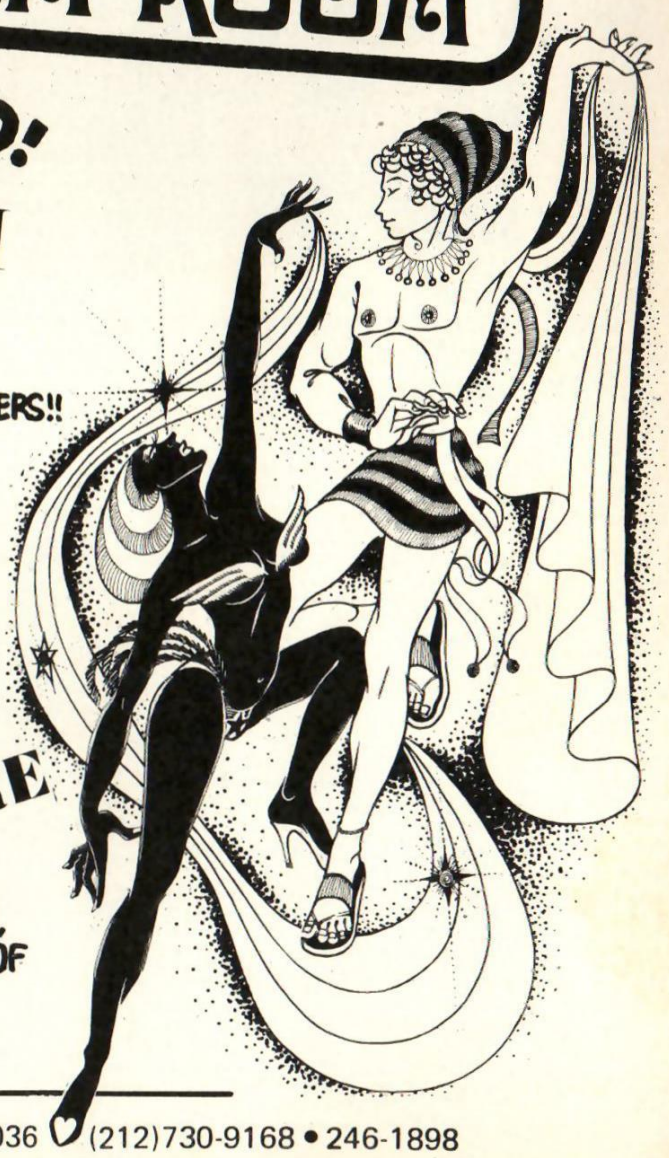

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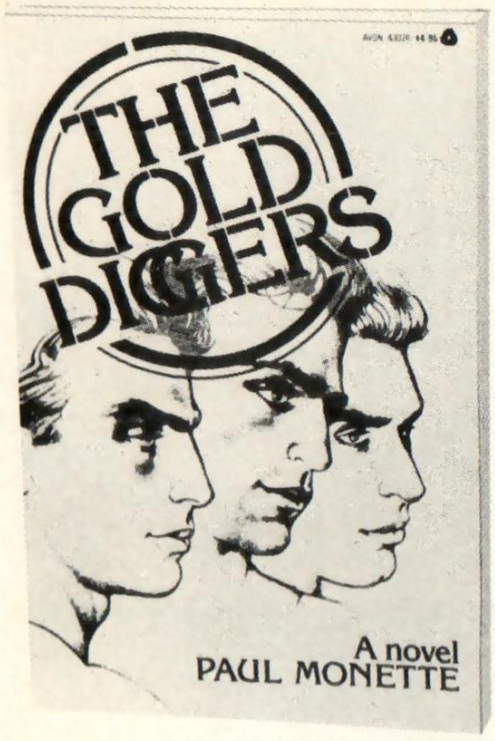

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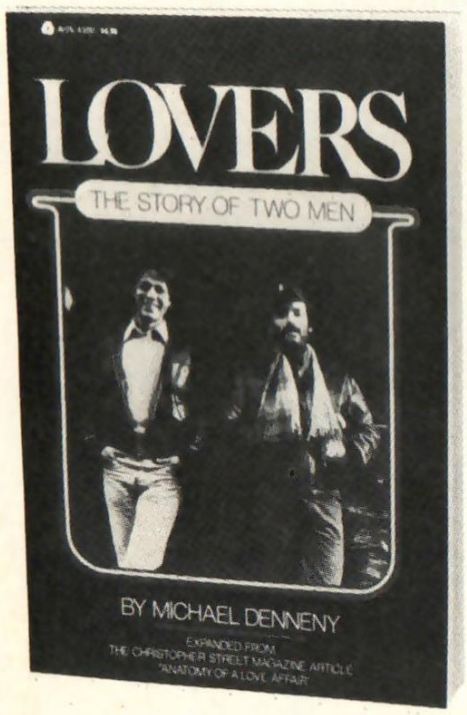
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Pinspot on L.A. Theater

Within the handsome severity of Sam Kirkpatrick's setting at the Ahmanson, Charlton Heston as Sir Thomas More gave a performance of gentle grace in *A Man for All Seasons*, Robert Bolt's accounting of 16th-century conflict between Church and State. Jack O'Brien's actors moved in courtly fashion.

With beautifully balanced charm and skill, Constance Towers met mighty Yul Brynner on equal terms at Pantages' opening of *The King and I*, that ever-colorful musical in the best tradition of the genre. Romance and adventure, Rogers and Hammerstein—they never go out of style so long as they are presented this stylishly.

By weaving his impassioned socio-political messages and witticisms into *Misalliance*, Shaw gave substance to this comedy of manners. Joseph Ruskin's direction and James J. Agazzi's elegantly interpretive set preserved the 1909 perspective in American Theater Arts' harmoniously cast and costumed production.

What cruel amusement Long Beach Center Theater's *Eccentricities of a Nightingale* seemed to evoke. Looking through the magnifying glass of satire at what was once *Summer and Smoke*, Tennessee Williams gave different emphases to his characters. But enlarging their pores did not reveal more of what lay under the skin. Sandy Dennis was a Miss Alma long since out of sync with reality. Perry King as young Dr. Buchanan conveyed the compassion which once pervaded the play, directed here by Michael Flanagan.

They've all earned high acclaim: Henry Fonda, Eva Marie Saint, writers Lawrence and Lee, director Edwin Sherin, designer Oliver Smith, etc., associated at the Hartford with *First Monday in October*. There's a nice sprinkling of snap-crackle quips, but too much talk and not enough theater in this treatment of behind-the-bench goings on when a veteran liberal Supreme Court Judge tangles with the Court's first female appointee, a conservative.

Earlier at the Hartford, *James Joyce's Women* was to the Irish literator as Wagner's wenches might be to that composer. A good actress despite occasional hollow histrionics, Fionnula Flanagan played a congeries of six women. Burgess Meredith's staging was minimal.

Halves, Robert Rueter's first play, showed him to be a perceptive writer well worth watching, and a director sensitive to the comedy within the domestic drama of marriage. At Group Repertory, Kenneth Lodge's clean-cut set framed four people portraying one couple in contrapuntal speech and action: Then (in bed behind a scrim) and Now (in their bedroom 20 years later).

Dealing lightly with heavy truths, the silky writing of Alan Ayckbourn in *Absent Friends* should not be confused with flimsy dramaturgy. At the Theater, director Bill Putch honed neat performances with an able cast revealing upper middle class people swimming against tides of realistic trivia.

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San Francisco

by James Armstrong

Nostalgia: Black and White

March blew us not one but two genuine masterpieces of musical entertainment, both high steppers. One was a revue of songs from the '30s and '40s called *The All Night Strut,* and the other a tribute to the black minstrel shows of yesteryear, *The Wake.* Both are rousing entertainment, brilliantly conceived, directed, and performed, and both were here all too short a time. *Strut* was booked for a two-month run, and *Wake* ran a single performance and was then translated to a run in various restored hostelries up in the Gold Rush Country, which is a perfect setting. However, it will return in the fall for a longer run.

The All Night Strut began in Cleveland in July, 1975, and with one cast or another has been performed steadily around the country ever since. Though it's played in Boston since September, 1978, it has yet to run in New York. S.F. got the revue by way of Los Angeles, and fell flat on its face over it. This is the kind of show that could run here for years. Its hour-and-a-half encompasses 20 standard songs from the Good Old Days *(In the Mood, Fascinatin' Rhythm, Java Jive, Ain't Misbehavin', A Fine Romance,* etc.) and a medley of those cretinous World War II songs. The latter, however, were so superbly done that they sounded marvelous, and *Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer* actually brought a lump to my throat.

Two couples perform (one white, one black) backed by a great combo. The arrangements are true to the period and at the very least, divinely inspired. Choreography is relentless and perfect. Though it is obviously an exhausting show, still the energy levels never faltered. This was one of the most exhilarating highs I've ever had in a theater. Inevitably, they remind one of Manhattan Transfer. The only thing that keeps them from being as good as M.T. is that these are not four voices of solo quality. It doesn't matter. It's spirit that counts. And I'll be much surprised if *Strut* isn't held over. And held over. And held over.

To understand *The Wake,* we must backtrack to *L.O. Sloan's Three White and Three Black Refined Jubilee Minstrels.* This extraordinary group was formed for a brief run as part of one of the local museum's bicentennial shenanigans. It was such a success that it toured this country, large chunks of England and Europe, and even Australia. Now they have returned to San Francisco. Without laying any heavy trips on the audience, their show is a compound of musical show business and social consciousness. An encapsulated history of Negro minstrel shows, their painstakingly researched repertory reaches from slave songs to Bert Williams, last of the Negro minstrels, who died in the middle of the Ziegfeld Follies of 1927. They do cakewalks, coon songs, spirituals—you name it.

(continued on p. 19)

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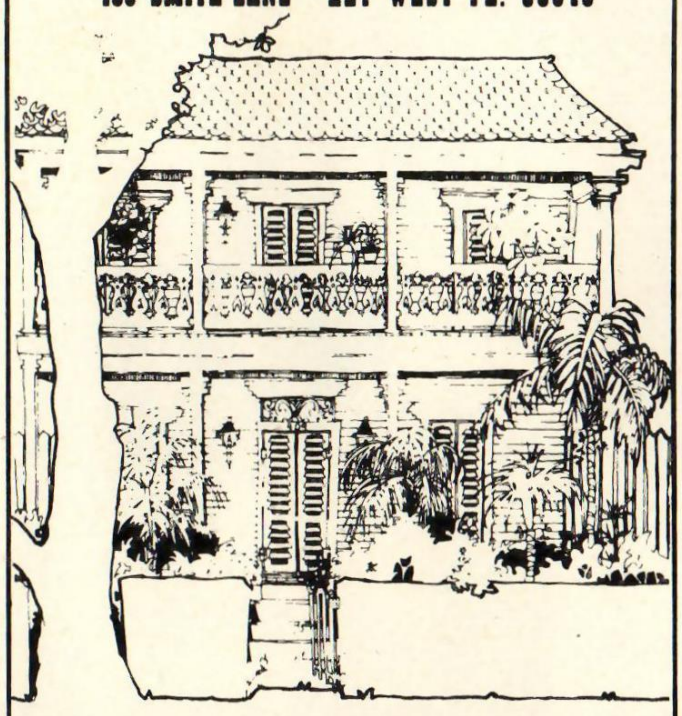

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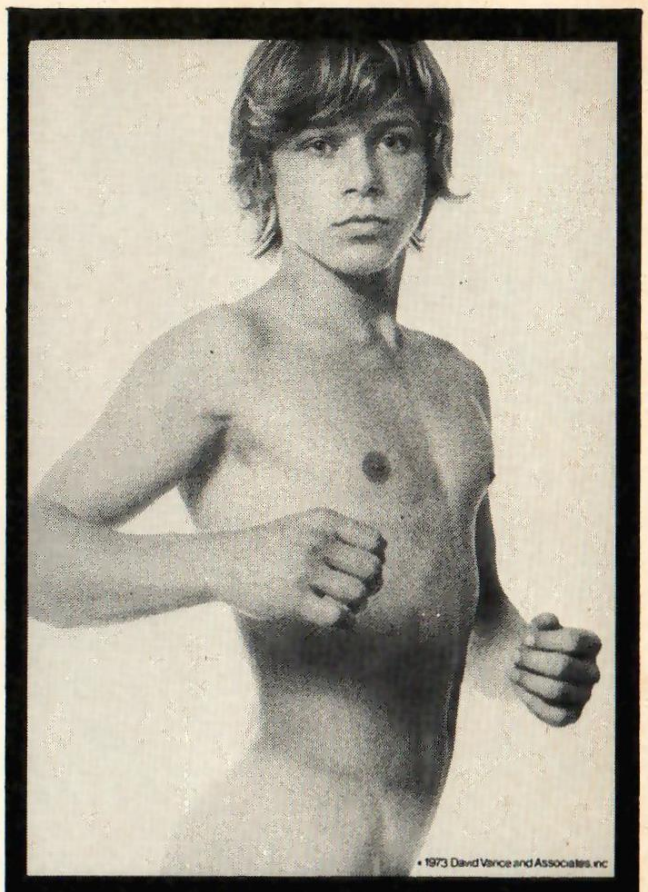

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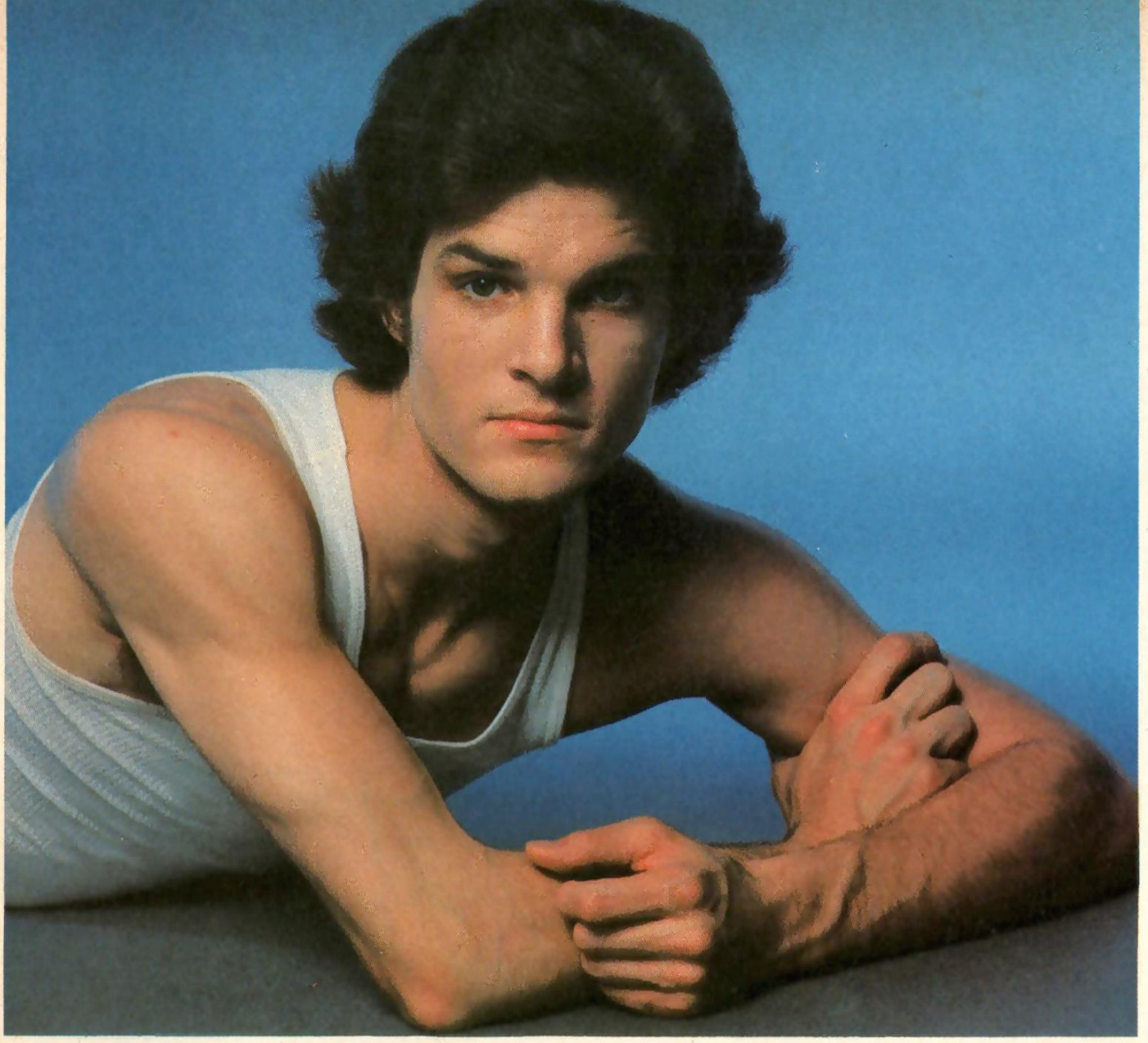


Kenn Duncan

Soloist Patrick Bissell dances the New York premiere of Antony Tudor's Tiller in the Fields *with Gelsey Kirkland and the new production of John Neumeier's* Elegy *with Natalia Makarova during American Ballet Theatre's season (April 16-June 9) at the Metropolitan Opera.*

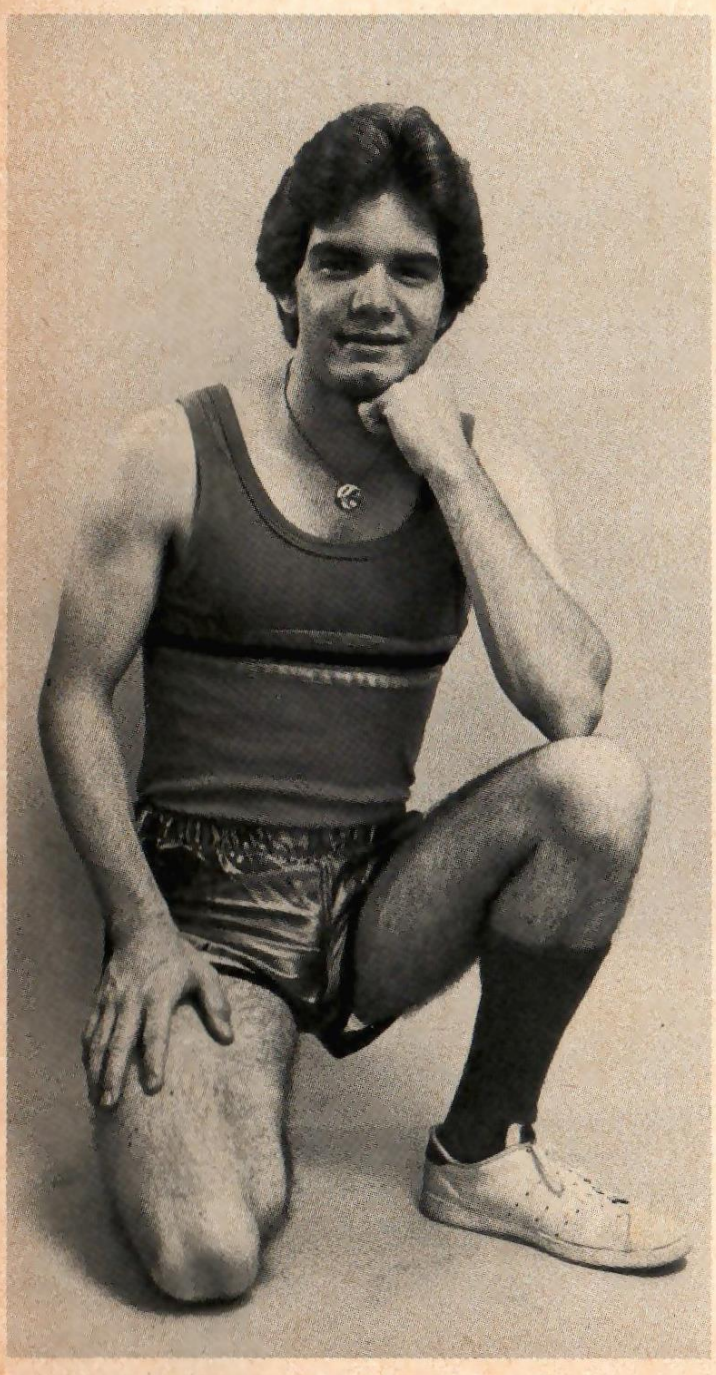
Maia Danziger (at right) stars as Magda in the film of Isaac Bashevis Singer's The Magician of Lublin, *directed by Menahem Golan and also starring Alan Arkin, Louise Fletcher, Shelley Winters, and Valerie Perrine.*

Tara Tyson (below), who received raves for her performance as Georgia Lloyd Bernhardt, the First Lady of Porn in Leonard Melfi's Porno Stars at Home, *and who recently starred in the West Coast engagement of Gregory Rozakis'* Person Unclaimed, *is the wife of shipping magnate Michael Kulukundis and one of New York's most glittering and iconoclastic hostesses.*

Jay Thompson

Perry King (above) appeared as John Buchanan, Jr., opposite Sandy Dennis in the Long Beach Theatre Festival production of Tennessee Williams' Eccentricities of a Nightingale.

As the protégé of Liberace, young Scotty Plummer (below) is making the quantum leap from red-haired, freckle-faced prodigy to banjo phenomenon of the adult entertainment world.



Don Bradburn

(continued from p. 17)

They sing and dance marvelously, and their spirit is irresistible. No small part of their speciality comes from the canniness and good humor with which the messages are imparted. There are doubtless other minstrel shows around, but none with a meaning so perfectly realized and deftly delivered.

The Wake, then, is their first "book" show. Previously, they could work anywhere, indoors or out. They would come on in a high-strutting parade, all gaudy rags and patches. Then Mr. Sloan would give his introductory spiel, and they would do their numbers, interspersed with bits of history that they wisely let speak for themselves. (Did you know that right up to Williams, a Negro minstrel had to wear full blackface makeup, like Al Jolson and Eddie Cantor?) *Wake,* however, needs better staging.

It's a fantasy, taking place in the aforementioned Williams' dressing room on the night of his death. His manager hosts the spirits of the five most famous names in minstrelsy, and what they deliver is a funny, sentimental, savage, searching history and explanation of the genre and of the stereotypes it engendered. They sing and dance the old songs and drink to Bert's memory. As they get drunker, they become more truthful with one another, and themselves, and history.

It's a superbly conceived, constructed, and paced revue. The material is mostly unfamiliar and fascinating. Brilliantly directed and performed, this is above all an intelligent show. From one moment to the next, you are spiritually moved, helpless with laughter, and reduced to tears, even over a song with the unlikely title *All Coons Look Alike to Me.*

Las Vegas

by Morag Veljkovic

Revival in Bagdad

I don't know what happened to Lola Falana, but her last appearance in the Bagdad Theatre of the Aladdin Hotel was disjointed and odd. First, her costumes were peculiar. With the exception of an elegant gown, in which she first appeared, she seemed to be promenading in a succession of nightwear throughout her act. Second, she danced only once (in a short nightie), and dancing was what many had come to see. Third, her choice of songs was strange and unconnected: a country medley and Israeli and Spanish hits, interspersed with love-thy-neighbor tunes. Maybe I'm a cynic, but I do dislike this business of let's all touch hands and look lovingly into each other's eyes. By the time "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah" was in full swing, I felt that I was seated at a revival meeting rather than in a Vegas showroom, and briefly considered dropping to my knees.

Storm in a Teacup

Tempest Storm appeared at the 20th Century Hotel in a forgettable revue. Out she came with her boa and black negligee, a stately

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redhead from a different world. In a town where nude bodies are common, and many would be better covered, Tempest's daring strip of yesteryear was a mild statement for today's Vegas audience. They were divided. Some tittered, as she coyly dropped a feather; some sat reverently watching a dying art. The aging maitre'd said the broad was classy and one of the greats; a redneck bellowed that he wanted the girls back. It made one wonder. Where is there left for them to perform, those ladylike strippers who made an art out of removing one glove and never letting it all hang out unless it was worth showing?

Toronto

by David C. Black

Shavian Lineup '79

An expanded Shaw Festival summer season opens late this month under the guest artistic directorship of Leslie Yeo. The Festival, which produced only four works last year, will present seven this year: three by Shaw, two plays about him, and two by his contemporaries. The Shavian works are *You Never Can Tell, Captain Brassbound's Conversion,* and *Village Wooing*, a one-acter being presented as an experiment in lunch-hour theater. Shaw-based offerings are *Dear Liar*, Jerome Kilty's adaptation of the correspondence between the playwright and his temperamental actress, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and *My Astonishing Self*, Michael Voysey's one-man portrait of Shaw. Noel Coward's spoof on spiritualism, *Blithe Spirit*, and Emlyn Williams' *The Corn Is Green* complete the playbill. Jackie Burroughs, Gillie Fenwick, Pat Galloway, Merrilyn Gann, Eric House, Peter Hutt, Betty Leighton, Jack Medley, Mary Savidge, Joseph Shaw, James Valentine, Tony van Bridge, and Leslie Yeo will head the 1979 acting company.

Special attractions at the Festival this summer include Grammy Award-winning Oscar Peterson, guitarist Liona Boyd, comedienne Anna Russell, the Huggett Family, and the Niagara Symphony, together with two superb one-man shows: John Cairney's brilliant characterization of Robert Burns and Tony van Bridge's acclaimed portrait of Bernard Shaw's friend and intellectual adversary, Gilbert Keith Chesterton. Christopher Newton will continue Shaw's expansionist policy when he assumes artist directorship for the 1980 season.

Historical Harpsichordist

Following his success at Heliconian Hall last year, Canadian harpsichordist Bradford Tracey returned recently for a series of concerts in towns and cities in Ontario. Attending a Tracey recital is a very special experience. His solid technique, musical vitality, and finesse have the power to transport a listener back in time to a period drawing room. Unfortunately, Tracey is a much better known performer in Europe than in his native land and now resides in Bad Krozingen Castle in Ger-

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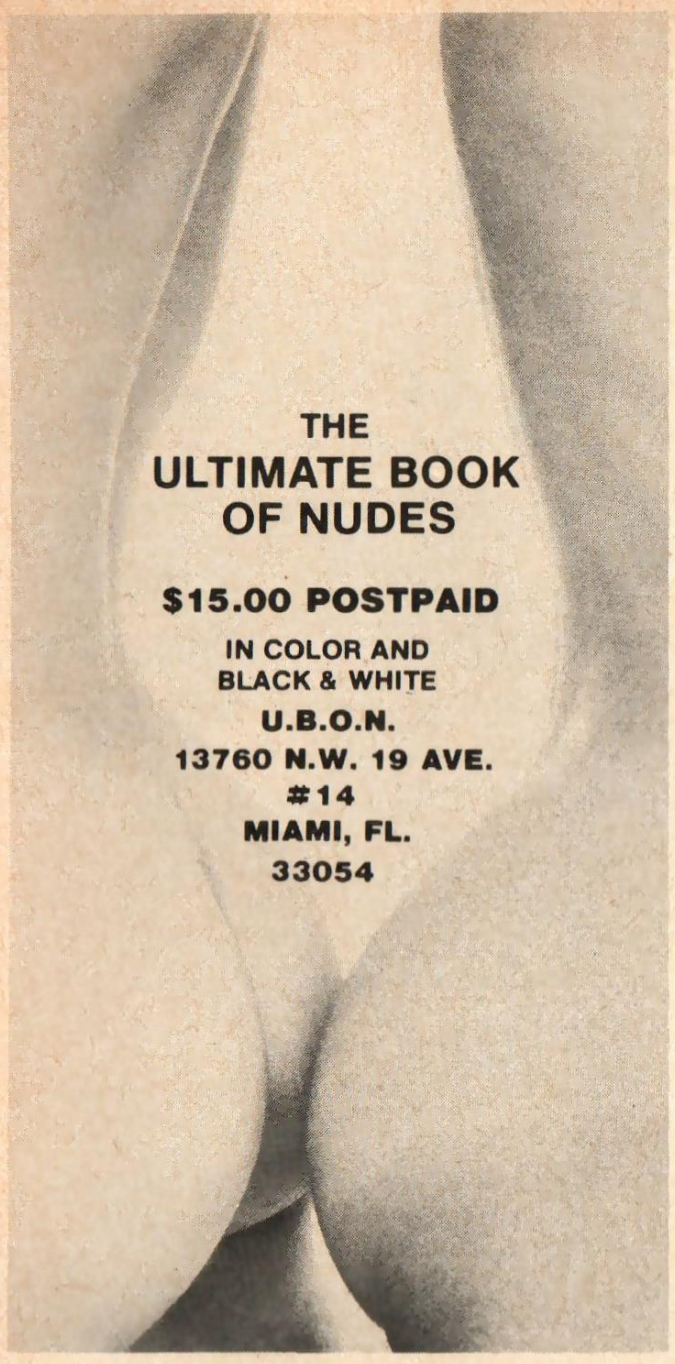

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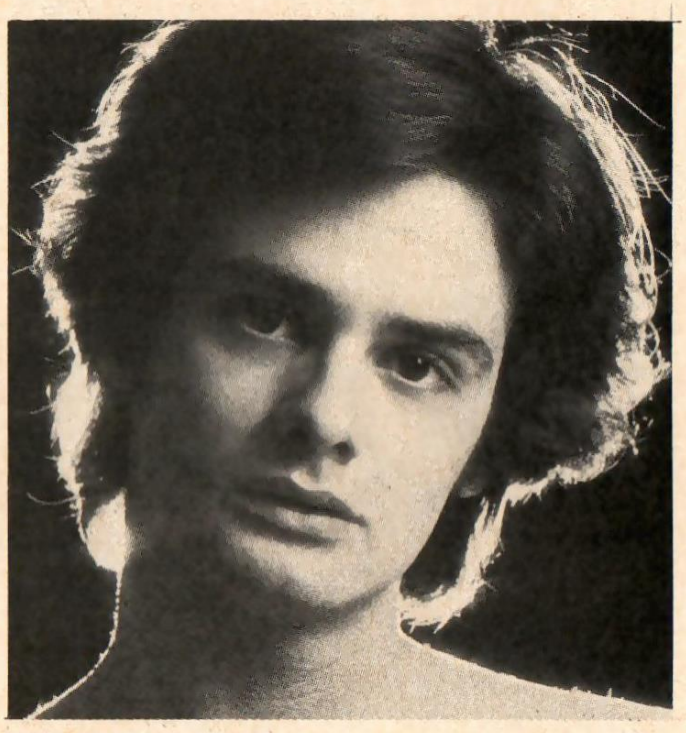
many where he studies and performs with the large and historical keyboard instrument collection of Prof. Fritz Neumeyer. In addition to his solo appearances on harpsichord, clavichord, pianoforte, virginal and chamber organ, he also performs with Rolf Junghanns in a keyboard duo and as an ensemble player with the Krozingen Music Collegium and the Ars Renata Ensemble.



Toronto-born Deni Allaire is now intent on making it in the States. He's just completed a stint in The Artful Dodger *at Louisville, KY's Beef 'n Boards Theater and currently he's in New York auditioning for parts. His credits in Canada include* Ah, Wilderness *at the Gryphon Theatre in Toronto and* The Ginger Bread Lady *at the Neptune Theatre in Halifax.*

Flinsch's Figures

Don't miss Peter Flinsch's one-man show at Gadatsy Gallery in Yorkville this month. His theme is the male figure and Flinsch's authoritative use of pen and ink, chalk, and charcoal clarifies the robust and erotic qualities of his models. It's his second show in Toronto in as many years, and is certain to repeat last year's sellout display.

REVIEWS: THEATER On Broadway and Off

by Patrick Pacheco

Stephen Sondheim and Harold Prince welcome us to their nightmare in the new Broadway musical, **Sweeney Todd**, which is currently painting the Uris Theatre red with wit and artistry. A bloody good musical, the Brechtian production is based on a popular English melodrama about a heinous and vengeful demon barber of Fleet Street, who sent his unsuspecting customers to a grizzly end as the tasty filling for Mrs. Lovett's meat pies. So ingrained is this pop villain in English folklore that many a nanny has admonished her wards to be good, lest they fall into the hands of Sweeney Todd. Lucky for Broadway that the razor-wielding and morose murderer ended up instead in the hands of Prince and Sondheim who take the mellow out of the drama and charge it with a haunting and enshrouded evil. The grating tenor is set immediately through Fran and Eugene Lee's clanging, sputtering, and grinding belted-and-steeled monstrosity of a set that provides its own cacophonic and shuddering accompaniment to the operatic score that leaves few openings for Hugh Wheeler's book. The theme that weaves its sinuous way throughout the madness and mayhem is a literal rendering of Brecht's "What Keeps a Man Alive"—that the history of the world comes down to this: who is to be eaten and who is to eat. Against a starkly evoked tableau of the industry-clogged London of the 1840s, *Sweeney Todd* unfolds with maliciously good cheer through the socially malignant machinations of Sweeney Todd and his hyper-helpmate, Mrs. Lovett, as narrated by a Gorey-esque and sad-faced wailing chorus. While keeping the modest action focused on centerstage, Prince matches the grandeur and scope of the score through a staging that moves seemingly large groups through the grunting, elephantine steel arms spreading into the wings and the catwalk spanning the stage. It is a miracle of movement and direction that tops what Prince so masterfully accomplished in his London production of *Evita*. Sondheim's songs are an intricate, ingenious, and well-integrated collection of dissonance and lyricism, irreverence and high drama, cheekiness and charm. "A Little Priest" is a rollicking and unapologetically punning puzzle of wordplays; "Beautiful Women" and "Joanna" are hauntingly lovely ballads of exquisite taste; and the entire score is minted with musical passages—some satirical, others moving, and still others thick with tension. Angela Lansbury's Mrs. Lovett is superbly played with a ratty, alley-cat feistiness that is contrapuntal to Len Cariou's grimly drawn Sweeney. Hers is a performance that is the highlight of this season. The first-rate production also features exceptionally fine supporting performances by Victor Garber, Sarah Rice, Ken Jenning, and Joaquin Romaguera. A scarifying and diverting yet serious musical, *Sweeney Todd* is a landmark event in Broadway history. It is a blood-curdling, mind-blowing experience that will make it hard for you to ever look at a meat pie again.

Norman Thayer is a cantankerous codger tottering into his 80th year and 48th summer on Golden Pond, with a mischievous glint and a lashing tongue that sardonically frames his world. His wife, Ethel (10 years his junior), is a waspishly brisk, no-nonsense woman with a disposition as unforcibly sunny and comforting as set designer Steve Rubin's cottage that fills the stage of the New Apollo, where Ernest Thompson's new comedy, **On Golden Pond**, opened recently. Despite the ubiquitous affirmation of life at their Maine getaway, Norman's birthday heightens his anxiety over encroaching death—an anxiety he expresses with con-

stant and morbidly funny references to the scythe-bearing marauder. This fidgeting pushes against Ethel's impregnable patience, learned over the years spent in the company of a man who would rather smirk than smile. Their coming to terms with this problem is what propels the comedy through five scenes that crackle with laughter and breezy wit. *On Golden Pond* is, moreover, a touching love story drawn with captivating charm by playwright Thompson and deftly and brilliantly brought to life by the performances of Tom Aldredge and Frances Sternhagen in the leading roles. Norman's re-entry into the mainstream of life comes through the upfront curiosity of a young boy, brought into the picture when the Thayers' daughter comes for a visit with her boyfriend and son in tow. Less successfully sketched are the confrontations between the daughter (suitably played by Barbara Andres) and her parents. These scenes appear shoehorned into the play to provide some dramatic conflict to feed the second act, which becomes a bit lengthy. There is drama enough in the final moments of play during which Norman suffers a near-seizure that forces Ethel to face the inevitable. She does so with a moving fortitude that confirms France Sternhagen's status as one of Broadway's finest leading actresses. Aldredge gives the best performance of his career as the crochety Norman, managing to imbue him with a reticent charm while firing off snappy salvos. Mark Bendo as the young boy had an ingenuous appeal, and Stan Lachow, as his father, and Ronn Carroll offered some fine support. Directed with admirable restraint by Craig Anderson (who produced the new comedy for the Hudson Guild Theatre last season), *On Golden Pond* is an enthrallingly funny play, marking the debut of a young playwright of promise and considerable talent—as heartening a prospect for Broadway as the new theater which it opened on 43rd Street. The New Apollo Theatre has gone from Bruce Lee to Norman Thayer, from Kung Fu to the bracing vitality of a live new comedy.

Sherman Yellen's **Strangers**, which had a short run at the Golden Theatre, followed the stormy courtship and marriage between Nobel Prize-winning novelist Sinclair Lewis and famed journalist Dorothy Thompson. Against a backdrop of world capitals shaken by the tempestuous political winds blowing through the '20s, '30s, and '40s, Lewis and Thompson play a politically conscious Scott and Zelda. He drinks interminably and worries about being usurped by the new novelists—Dreiser, Hemingway, Fitzgerald—who are coming up in the ranks. She interviews Adolf Hitler, files nasty reports on the Nazis. and is kicked out of Germany. When she wakes up to find herself with fame and with a cause, their marriage and relationship groan under the pressures which crowd in on both of them, gradually eroding the bunker of strength which Thompson throws up against Lewis' destructive insecurity and irascibility. Given the dramatic fabric of the world they live in, *Strangers* is fascinating subject matter, but Yellen is so self-consciously his-

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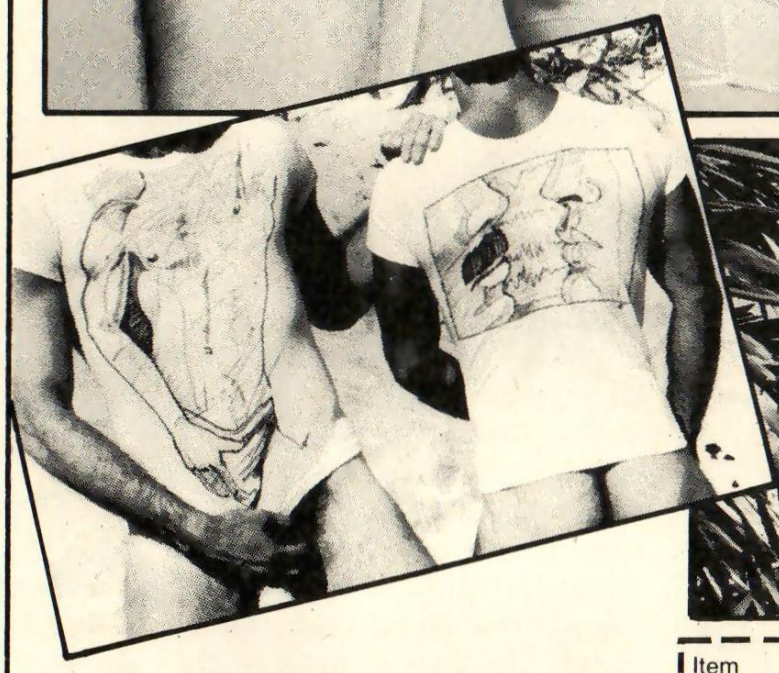

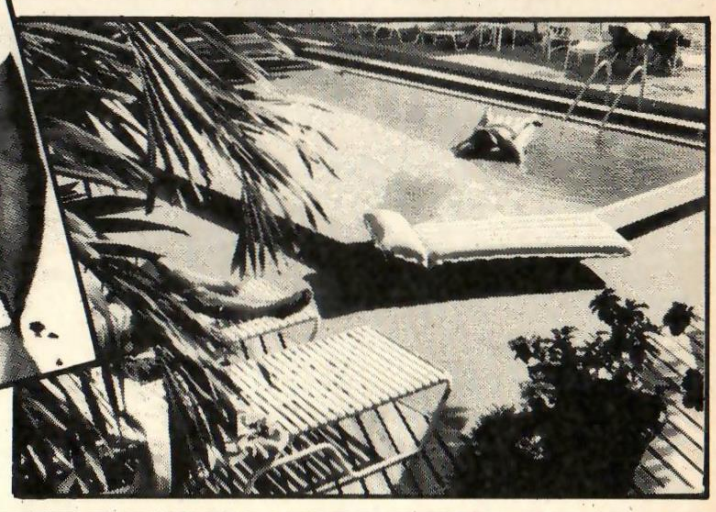

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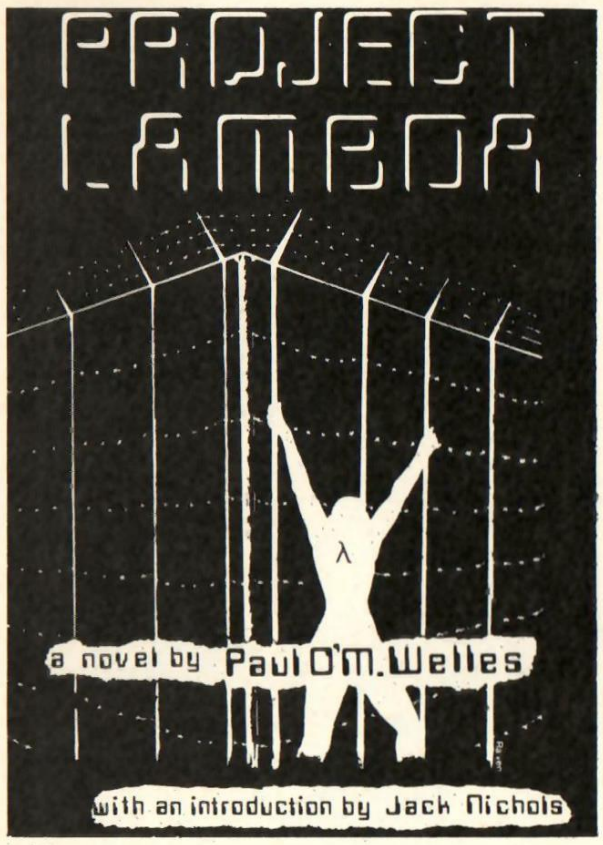

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torical and clever in writing about his characters that he never allows them to take on a life of their own—they never become involving. As played by Bruce Dern, Lewis was so antagonistic and schizoid that one suspected Thompson for finding attractive such a malcontent. Lois Nettleton painted Thompson with an intriguing womanly strength and grandness, which failed to convey why any such character would settle down to a domesticated existence on a farm. Arvin Brown's direction kept the action flowing smoothly but did little to resolve the conflicts in character and action that muffled and finally smothered this play.

Bruce Dern and Lois Nettleton portrayed novelist Sinclair Lewis and journalist Dorothy Thompson in Sherman Yellen's Strangers, *which had a short run at the Golden Theatre.*

Playwright Thomas Babe is becoming as prolific as filmmaker Robert Altman and just as frustrating. Granted that Joseph Papp's Public Theater is meant to be a forum for works-in-progress, but doesn't Babe ever finish anything or develop his material to the point that it borders on some cohesion? In **Taken in Marriage** at the Newman Theater, five women, brought together by the wedding of the youngest in a small New Hampshire town, air their considerable collective experience in dealing with the world and with men. Punctuated with musical interludes of sappy old songs, the encounters and monologues create a *walpurgisnacht* in the afternoon, but there is little revelation and even less release from the tensions that cloud Karen Schultz's tacky community hall setting. Given the affluence and New York snobbery of four of the women, there is an amusing comment on the class struggle as they are baited and ultimately duped by the cheesy, gum-smacking local strumpet (grittily played by Dixie Carter). The queasy bride-to-be (Kathleen Quinlan) and her cynically crusty, five-times-married sister (Meryl Streep) renegotiate their childhood, while their no-nonsense earth mother (Colleen Dewhurst) and homosexual aunt (Elizabeth Wilson) exorcise their own demons. Like Altman's *A Wedding*, *Taken in Marriage*, directed by Robert Allan Ackerman, is a caustic assault on marriage, courtship, and fidelity, but it offers no resolutions or insights. We are left, literally, with that old song and dance, when these magnetic actresses do a chorus-line soft-shoe as a finale.

Other Stages

by Glenn Loney

Want to double your fun? Don't bother about Broadway theater—everything there bogs down in excessive production costs and superhype. Currently, off-off-Broadway is where it's at. Not only has it been reviving forgotten classics Broadway will never see, but it's also taken chances on new scripts which later light up Broadway. From the tiny Hudson Guild alone, in a matter of months, have come successful, much admired Broadway transfers of *Da* and *On Golden Pond.* Not everything good on the OOBA circuit can or should transfer, though. Intimate productions are lost in Broadway houses. Difficult scripts, unpleasant themes, awkward plotting, surreal visions, demanding classics: all these are better left in small theaters with discriminating audiences who know how to value various kinds of experiment.

Recently, on a night when I was slated to make duty calls on two theaters, one an early and one a late show, I had one of the most enjoyable evenings I've had in the theater in a long time. My first visit was to the Repertorio Español, performing in the Gramercy Arts, New York's oldest functioning little theater. **Romeo y Julieta**, in Pablo Neruda's fine translation, was the drama, with a young company. I wasn't expecting anything more than dedicated amateurs. And, although I went because I think we must share more in Hispanic culture—which does *not* include transistors played on the subway—my Spanish is a bit rusty. What a delight, then, to find that the clarity and incisiveness of the diction of the major actors made it possible to follow this well-loved tragedy with ease. Even those who know no Spanish but know the play will find much of emotional power and visual beauty in this ingenious production. The stage is tiny, but director Rene Buch deployed his large cast with inventiveness. Sword fights were really exciting, but so were the conflicts and consummations of the characters. Ofelia Gonzalez as the Nurse was memorable. Mateo Gomez and Elizabeth Pena as Romeo and Juliet were vibrant, tender, moving.

Rushing out before the play was over, I arrived at Christopher Martin's CSC Repertory, late, to find him discussing Frank Wedekind's **Marquis of Keith** with the audience. As soon as I was seated, the play began. The

play is staged in expressionist style by Martin, who also translated for this American premiere. Clay Coyle's sets and Terry Bennett's striking costumes created a marvelous effect, on a very limited budget. This satire on mindless hedonism and cruel capitalism in pre-World War I Munich, with its common-man, con-man Marquis setting things in motion, seems a period echo of modern American society and our own fashionable follies. I had been avoiding CSC Rep productions for some time, feeling that the ensemble was not equal to many of the challenges set them by the various classics they had tackled. Now, I have to say that they have improved and grown tremendously as a group of players. There were some really impressive performances in this exercise in high style: Patrick Egan, Karen Sunde, and Ray Dooley, among others. This important Central European drama continues in rep with John O'Keeffe's long-forgotten **Wild Oats**, widely praised by New York's most severe critics. That should have told me things were looking up at CSC—I thought it was merely the play, done so expertly by the RSC in London.

Ian Anderson

Ellen Greene and Caroline Kava were featured in the Direct Theatre Production of Christopher Durang's The Nature and Purpose of the Universe.

From Czechoslovakia came **Coquelico**, an odd combination of Prague's Black Theatre, Laterna Magicka, and other techniques. This means live actors work with their counterparts on a giant Cinerama-like screen; objects seem to move in space by themselves, etc., etc. Packaged by Prague's master stage designer, Josef Svoboda, this technology was by itself interesting—but not new, by two decades. Back when it was a real novelty, Svoboda told me the problem was finding some truly artistic themes, stories for the techniques. Unfortunately, the feature film Ewald Schorm has made for *Coquelico* is the kind of evasion of art or content the Czechs have practiced ever since they came under Soviet influence. Two clowns, hatched from eggs, pursue a vision of Venus—wear-

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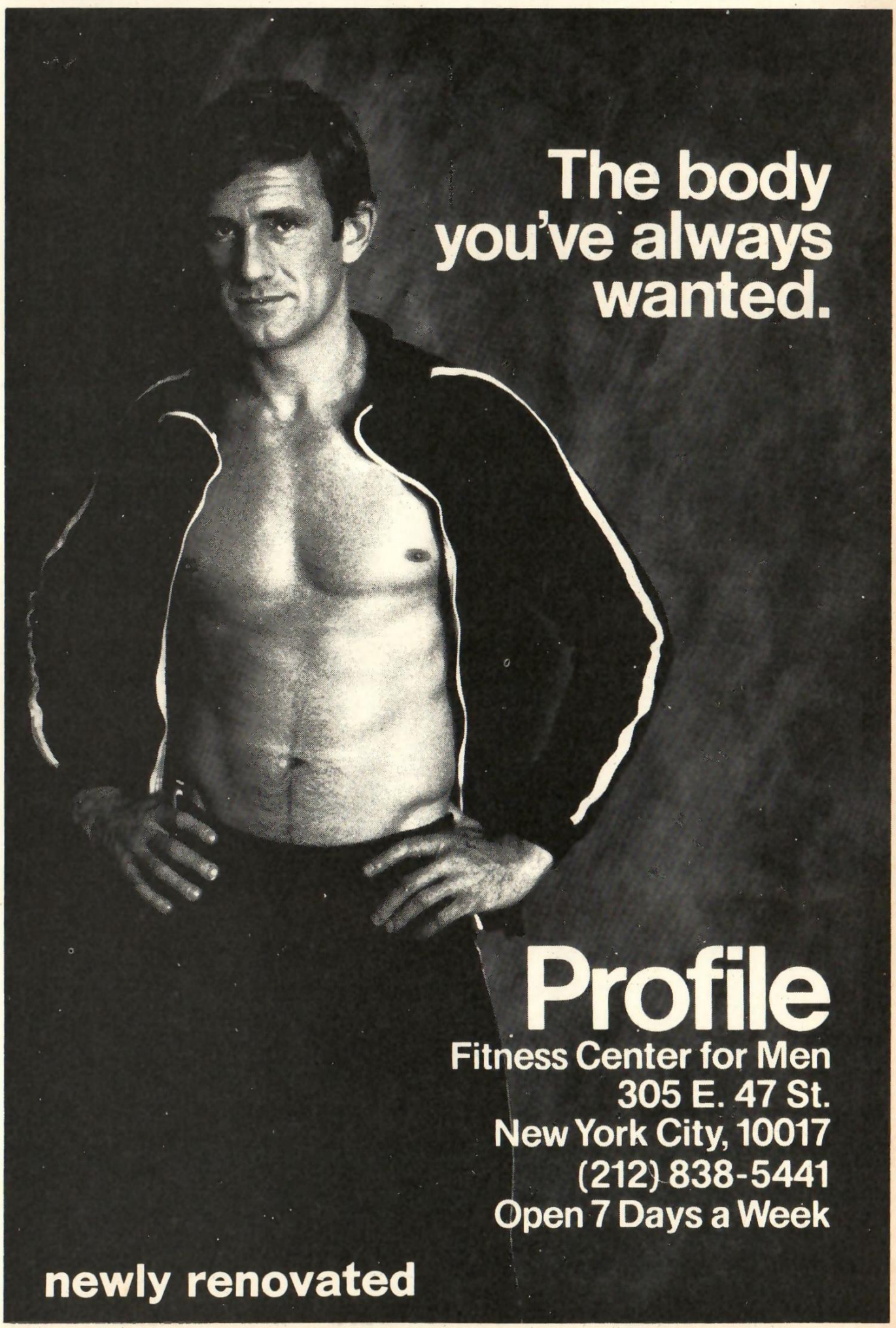

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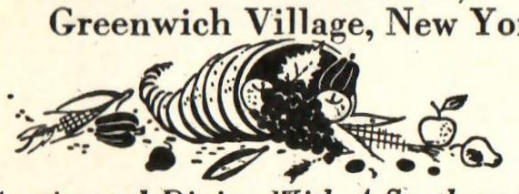

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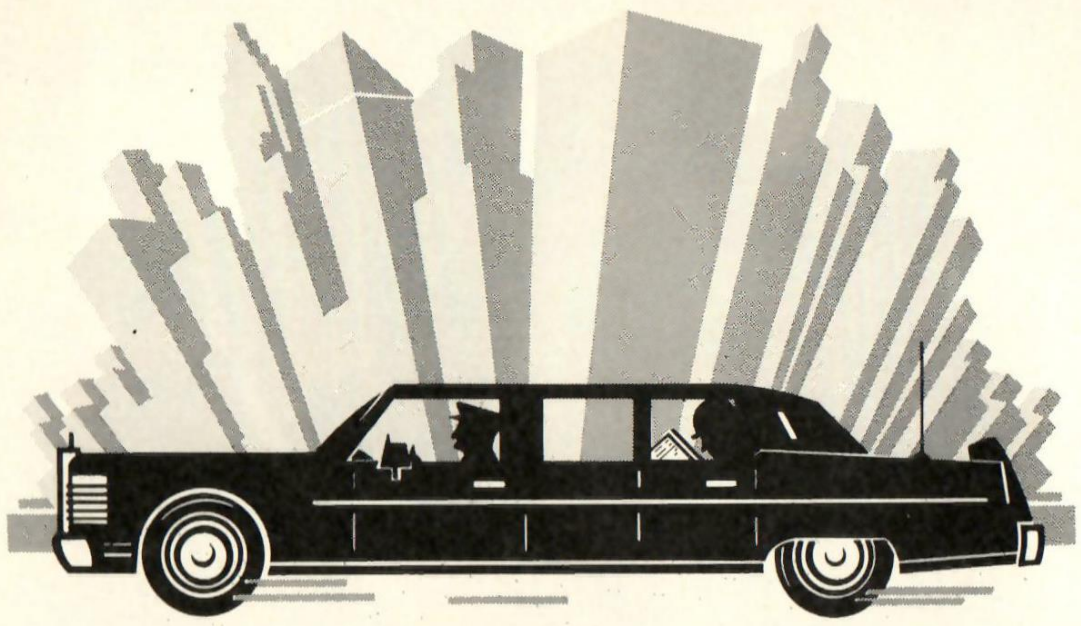

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ing pink long johns and looking as sexy as a Macy's window dummy. She represents, the program tells us, beauty and goodness. There is also a diabolic photographer. *Oy weh*! Why do Europeans find clowns and circus images so "funny," so entrancing, so laden with unexplained symbolism? Béjart has done the same in his new ballet, *Dichterliebe —Amor d'un Poet*, with a great deal more glitz and style. And it still looks like pretentious nonsense. But Belgium isn't yet communist, so there are redeeming balletic titillations along the way.

Deeply impressive, however, was Tadeusz Kantor's **The Dead Class**, which traveled from Cracow, Poland, to LaMama ETC. It was as striking this time as when I reviewed it for *After Dark* at the Edinburgh Festival in 1977. A "seance" of the dead, Kantor's artist ensemble live an afterlife, burdened with waxen images of themselves as children, in which they repeat the follies of their own lives—and all humanity—in the confines of an old schoolroom. The thrust of the work suggests that no one learns anything from his mistakes; we are doomed to repeat them.

Rosalyn Drexler's new play, **The Writer's Opera**, as written and as staged by John Vaccaro, has some marvelous moments of hysteria and parody in it, but its core is deeply serious. How we relate to each other, how we communicate, how we create both art and relationships, and how we destroy—all these themes are treated somewhat obliquely, but not without real pain underneath. Gordon Bressac, Crystal Field, Joe Pichette, and Madeleine Le Roux were especially good.

But giving full-stage production to Chris Durang's **Nature and Purpose of the Universe**, first done as a radio-studio show to save money, was not good. The radio ploy gave the outrageous material a needed distancing. Played in styles that hovered between realism and Hasty Pudding Show, the script became painfully sophomoric and embarrassing. Can Durang write a play and leave parody out of it?

FILMS

by Norma McLain Stoop

Movie of the Month:

Let me say at the start that **Norma Rae** (produced by Tamara Asseyev and Alex Rose, directed by Martin Ritt, 20th Century-Fox) is a tremendous movie that generates a kind of electricity rare in motion pictures. Throughout, there is a feeling of group involvement, group effort that is perhaps the key to the filmmakers' great success in putting an unusual and interesting idea on the screen. The words *belief*, *honesty*, and *integrity* figure heavily in what producers Tamara Asseyev and Alex Rose have accomplished. One feels that they, director Martin Ritt, Sally Field, Ron Leibman, and *all* their fellow actors, director of photography John A. Alonzo, and screenwriters Irving Ravetch and Harriet Frank, Jr., were fired by a deeply felt and de-

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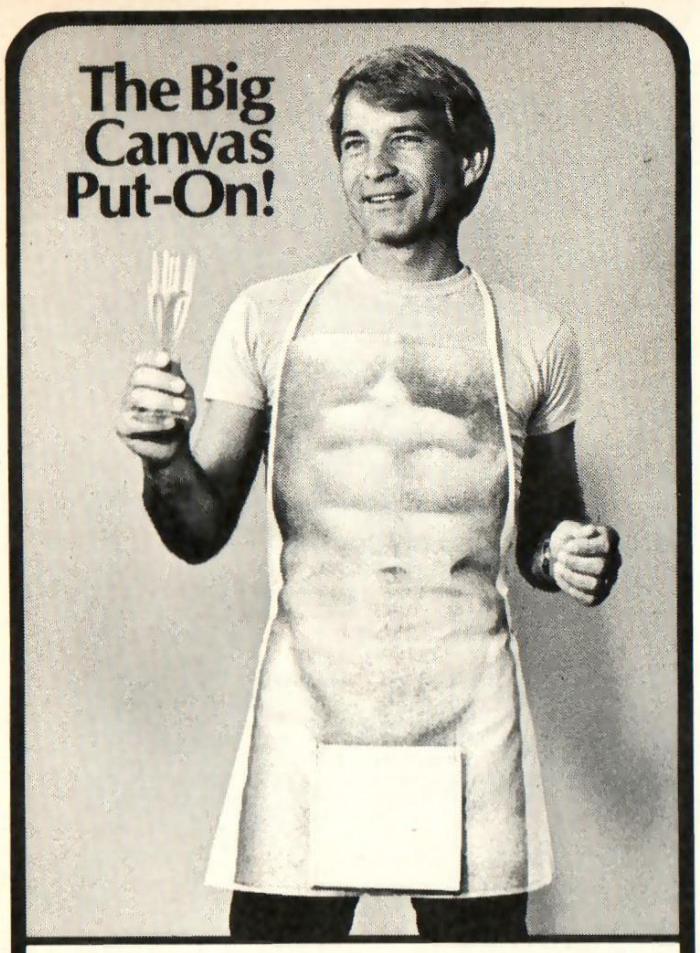

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termined common purpose: to bring to the screen a story of growth and hope. This story is of an uneducated, underprivileged southern woman who works in a textile mill and is, till she's 31, seemingly doomed to live out her days helplessly and hopelessly, raising her children in repetition of her own dreary life, having to wait till a break-time at the mill to gain even the privilege of dying. Along comes a stranger, a highly educated, conscientious, warm, wisecracking Jewish labor organizer from New York, and gradually, convincingly, and in a subtle way, she is psychologically, morally, and philosophically buttressed by his example and his ideas.

The depth of all the character delineations and the validity of the development and growth depicted is mind-boggling. Sally Field is obviously and most definitely in line for every possible award for her deeply thought-out portrayal of Norma Rae—a real tour de force. I shouldn't wonder that Ron Leibman, always a strong, intelligent (and, to my mind, far too unappreciated) actor, might also glean awards for the unforced and ingenious quality of his acting as the labor organizer. Beau Bridges acquits himself very well in a supporting role, and Pat Hingle and Barbara Baxley do the fine work one expects of them, as Norma Rae's father and mother. The film is compelling, with humor underlining its essential pathos. Director Martin Ritt deserves uncommon credit for the remarkable sense of responsibility he displays. While passionately involved with the mill workers' problems, he never spills over into undue glorification of them or into overboard indictment of the mill owners, cleverly letting the viewer assess the situation and place the blame without being pressured into it. *Norma Rae* is unique and there is a sweet smell of greatness about it. The film leaves one shaken, and grateful to have seen it.

The muted images accompanying the opening credits of **Hair** (produced by Lester Persky and Michael Butler, directed by Milos Forman, United Artists), are exactly the opposite of what one expects to see introducing a movie celebrating the flower children of the '60s, points up the sheer brilliance of this film. It is surprisingly unpredictable, though its characters and music still live in the minds of those who saw the original show a decade ago. Cinematographer Miroslav Ondricek and director Milos Forman show us America and Americans with the perception of those who have not been born here and so have a rare and precious freshness of vision. The screenplay of the funny, zany, and tragic myth of an Oklahoma farm boy, a New Jersey WASP debutante, a pregnant hippie, and her Jewish, black, and blond gentlemen friends is not always completely convincing, but Forman's sharply paced direction, Ondricek's luminous photography, Lynzee Klingman's super editing, Galt MacDermot's music, Gerome Ragni and James Rado's lyrics, and Twyla Tharp's wonderfully random choreography conspire to make *Hair* enormously enjoyable and wonderfully evocative of the days of draft card burnings, be-ins, and rest-

(continued on p. 80)

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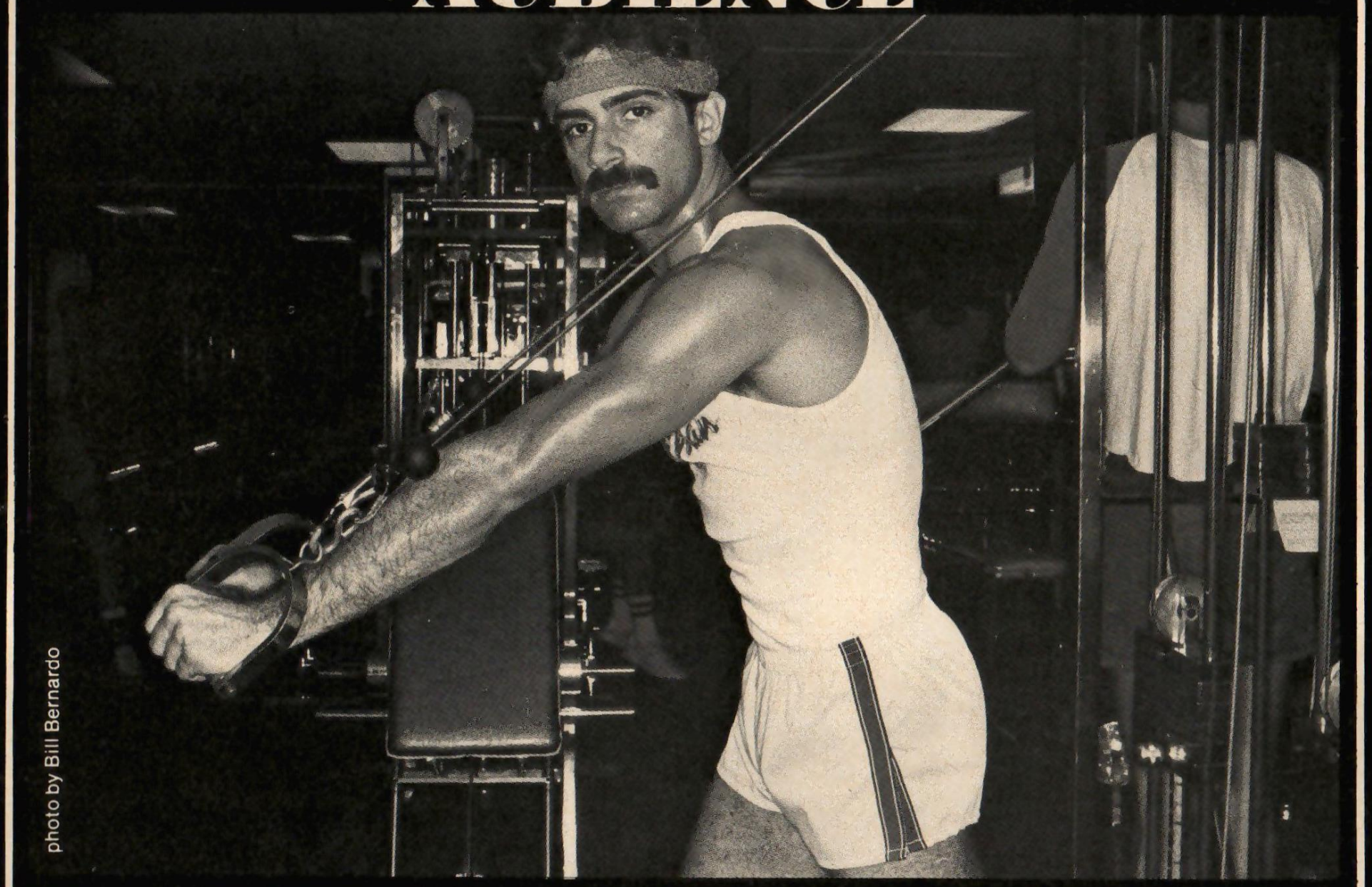

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THE PUMP-HOUSE BOYS

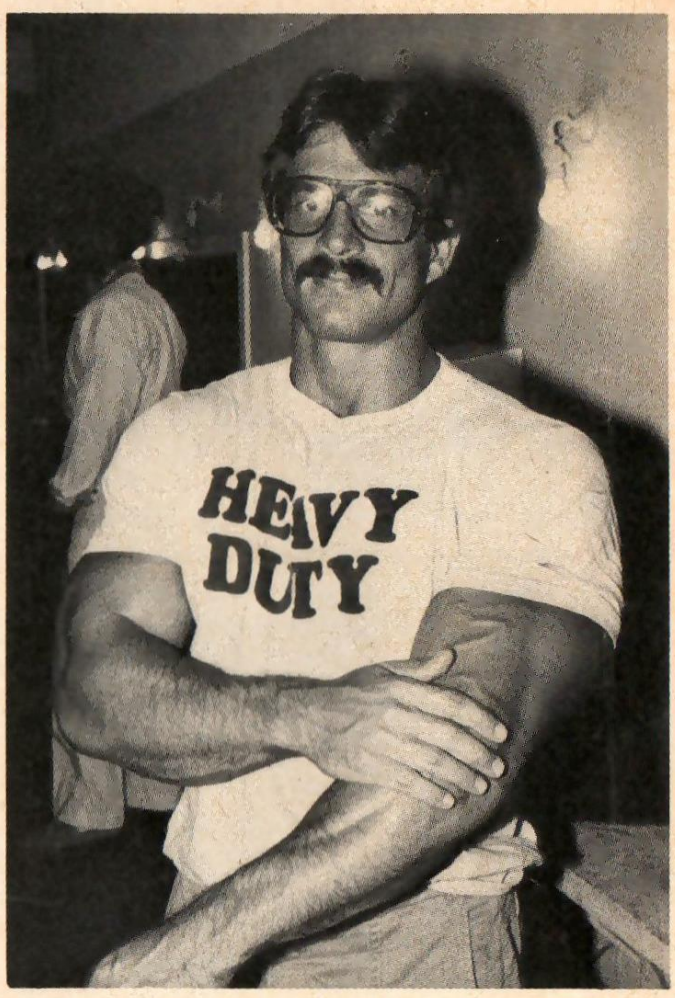
by Chris Huizenga

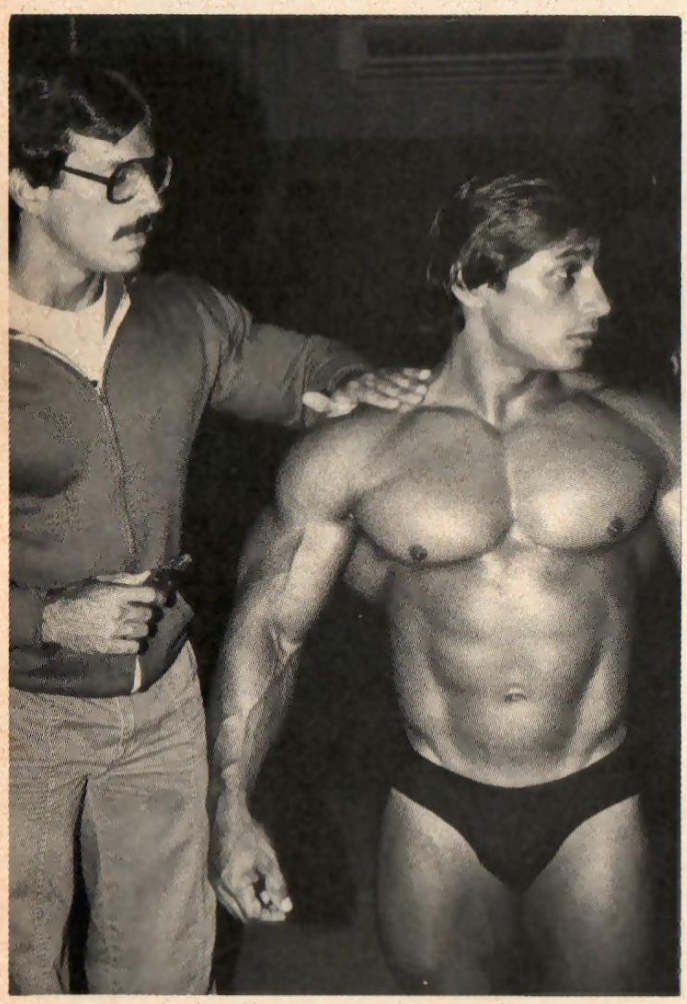
photos by Herb Ritts

William Cambra of California (below, left) is ready to step forward for the pre-judging finals of the Mr. Teenage America contest at Gold's Gym. Charles Wispert of Hepzihah, Georgia, follows Cambra and strikes the pose (below, right) that qualifies him as a finalist.

Show biz has taken many shapes and forms in recent years, but one of the shapeliest is the recent explosion of bodybuilding that has caught the fancy of young men everywhere. With rock idols adding luster to the image of the flamboyant male, with the plethora of liberation movements cutting a swath through the forest of taboos, young males have decided to experiment and create handsome, sexy self-images for themselves. Of course, adolescence has always been a time of sexual awakenings, social crises, and curious fixations; a time of rebellion against the strictures of the previous generation. Today, teenage boys seem to be suggesting that physical prowess achieved through sports doesn't adequately compare to that winning combination of health and cosmetic self-improvement which bodybuilding affords. So now there is the not uncommon sight of young men working out with weights and exhibiting the kind of intense determination that one previously noticed only in the feminine gender on their way to the cosmetic counter or the plastic surgeon. And the parents are consenting. During a recent New York City milk strike, one father noted that he had to drive to New Jersey to obtain milk for his sixteen-year-old son "who's into bodybuilding. He really needs to

During the hectic pre-judging finals of the Mr. Teenage America contest held at Gold's Gym in Los Angeles last fall, Rudy Hermosillo of Los Angeles works out in the dressing room (at right). Mr. Teenage America hopefuls (below) wait in line for the final selection of the winner, who turns out to be Rudy.





In the Gold's Gym dressing room before the main event of the Mr. Teenage America contest in Los Angeles, contestants relax (above). Mike Mentzer, the first place winner of the U.S. World Cup (upper right and lower left) oils up Danny Padilla for his impending appearance. Curt Mann of Atlanta, Georgia (above right, standing), and John Carter of Ridley Park, Pennsylvania (above right, sitting), take a breather before the final call.

drink a couple of gallons a day," the proud parent said.

Although the rewards of bodybuilding are mainly personal, there are occasional contests—Mr. America, Mr. Universe, or NOW's perverse variation of Mr. U.S.A.—which usually produce the same revulsion that Miss America pageants invariably provoke. But an interesting exception was a teen competition at the fabled Gold's Gym in Los Angeles last fall, which showed off some of the local talent nurtured under California's golden sun. The combination of youth, muscles, and good looks made this contest different from the usual big-league fare of overly distended triceps and ropy necks. While the Actaeon form of a Schwarzenegger remains the standard of the world, the custom Rolls-Royce of bodybuilding, this precocious Herculean procession was a curious but refreshing variation on a sport often tainted by jaded narcissism

TEEN IDOLS:

PACKAGING THE BOY-NEXT-DOOR

by Michael Musto

Here's the recipe: a pair of deep blue eyes, a wholesome but inviting pair of lips, strands of sun-drenched hair, swiveling hips, a satin jacket subtly revealing a smooth, hairless chest, and finally a pinch—just a pinch—of androgyny. As long as what you've created isn't too overwhelming in the talent department, you've got it. A teen dream, that is.

Every generation has its own. In the 1950s, there were Fabian and Pat Boone and Frankie Avalon and Sal Mineo and Rick Nelson and, of course, Elvis. The rebellious 1960s brought David Cassidy, Bobby Sherman, the Fab Four (The Beatles), and the Prefab Four (the Monkees, who were arbitrarily handpicked for teen stardom). With the blasé 1970s, teen dreams are still with us. The current crop, led by Shaun Cassidy, Andy Gibb, Leif Garrett, the Bay City Rollers, and a slew of other flaxen-haired, meringue-faced, bland but thoroughly likable boys-next-door, are more expert at capitalizing on the teen market than anyone before them.

Teen dreams don't necessarily make it because of their overwhelming voices or acting ability. More often, they make it because their uni-dimensional talents and personalities are suited to the fleeting, pre-sexual whims of the clamoring, adolescent girls who buy their records, go to their concerts, watch their TV shows, buy their magazines, memorize what they eat for breakfast, and fantasize about holding their hands and drifting off into the dawn. Every few years, a new set of thirteen-year-olds emerges, chooses new pretty boy icons, and devours them mercilessly, just like their older sisters before them. The old teen dreams, meanwhile, having been easily digested, are painlessly spit out and easily replaced.

Today's teen dreams are perhaps a little

Pretty . . . accessible . . . warm . . . unintimidating. That's what characterizes the teen dreams, and that's also how one might describe Andrew Stevens, who's at the forefront of the current crop. Most visible in TV movies like "The Bastard," Stevens exudes readily digested teen appeal—and the fact that he's the son of actress Stella Stevens and the husband of "Charlie's Angel" Kate Jackson hasn't hurt him either.

Michael Childers/Sygma

Bob Gruen

Barry Levine

Lynn Goldsmith

wiser about the syndrome, and a little hipper in their lifestyles and their musical roots than those of the past, but basically it's a case of "the name's been changed." Shaun Cassidy obviously has some career smarts and a genuine affinity for rock-and-roll, but how different an experience would a Shaun concert be if the body pulsating under the satin jacket was Bobby Vee or Bobby Sherman or even David Cassidy, Shaun's half-brother and ex-teen dream, who gave Shaun an instant "in" into teen stardom after he abdicated his throne when a fan was killed in a stampede at one of his concerts.

Andy Gibb, one of Shaun's current rivals, was also bequeathed his key to teen stardom by family—his older brothers, the Bee Gees, who were sizzling when Andy made his breakthrough. Andy is now considered one of the hottest recording stars in the world, in addition to being a top teen idol. He has all the requisite characteristics for teen dream-dom: slender hips, sensitive eyes, an ingratiating manner, a vibrating pelvis, and

Teen dreams range from the outrageous comic book refugees Kiss (opposite page, top) to Virgin, five sun-drenched Adonises who are still young enough to have pubescent dreams of their own (opposite page bottom). Somewhere in between lurk Scott Baio (left), Fonzie's street-tough cousin Chaci on "Happy Days"; and Stuart "Woody" Wood (below) and the squeaky-clean Bay City Rollers (below left). Teen Dream Ratings: Kiss—5; Scott Baio—7; The Rollers—8; Virgin—50 (10 each). (Points are deducted for talent and personality).

Waring Abbott

Glenn M. Brown

influential siblings. He also has chest hair, but has somehow managed to rise above that handicap.

"Today's teen dreams are perhaps a little wiser about the syndrome than those of the past . . . "

The Alessis are still awaiting their first Top Forty U.S. hit, along with which they hope will come their chance to transcend the teen genre. "We'd like to get the whole media," they say. "We'd like to get old right down to young." The same applies to Virgin. "We'd like to grow," says Dirk Etienne, "and not leave the teens behind. There's a big Middle America out there, and we don't want to scare them." The same goes for Shaun Cassidy, Leif Garrett, the Bay City Rollers, and every other teen dream, who, intimidated by their all-female audiences, crave peer pressure and wider acceptance.

" 'Teen idol'," says Randi Reisfeld, "can be a dirty expression. They want to be taken seriously. Shaun feels he has the potential to attract a large audience. The Beatles and Elvis did. John Travolta did." And Andy Gibb? "Well, I think Andy has potential," she whimpers, with a mock swoon. "But I have a crush on him, so I can't be objective."

In person, the Alessis' looks have incited stampedes around the world, and while Billy was a bit put off by a mob scene that ensued upon their arrival in London, both brothers love the response they get from their fans. Naturally, though, they prefer it via the mails. "We love it," says Billy and Bobby, who are into T-Birds and art nouveau antiques. "We're affected by it. We got a letter from a guy who broke up with his girlfriend, and our music explained everything to him. It helped him get through it a lot easier. That really affected me. To know that our music gets across like that means we're doing something right." The other Alessi nods, but he looks a little perturbed; he is still thinking about their look and the reaction it gets. "Tell you the truth," he says, "I don't think we're so great looking. I think we have horrible noses. We see a picture of us and go, 'Oh, God!' "

Still, they're positively stunning compared to those other teen idols—the grotesquely made-up, larger-than-life quartet called Kiss, which amazingly comes in number one above Shaun, Leif, and Andy in *16*'s surveys. Kiss, actually, aren't teen heartthrobs or teen dreams—they're teen heroes, fire-spitting cartoon characters that teenage boys find spectacularly amusing, the way their older brothers thrilled to Alice Cooper's demonics a few years ago. Danny Field explains their appeal: "There's nothing overtly sexual or menacing about them. It's a good act. It has flash and fire. You don't have to be able to analyze the situation to respond to it emotionally, as a child would."

Incredibly, the disco group the Village People has been creating similar teen hysteria lately, with their cartoonish characterizations and pseudo-macho poses,

Lynn Goldsmith

Andy Gibb (opposite page) was bequeathed his teen dream-dom by his brothers, who happen to be the Bee Gees. Still, he's managed to have four big hits and conquer the stigma of chest hair all on his own. John Travolta (right) has transcended the teen genre and launched a successful adult movie career; Henry Winkler of "Happy Days" (center) and Willie Aames of "Eight Is Enough" (far right) typify easily disposible TV heroes; while blond-haired Leif Garrett (far bottom) aspires to rock stardom à la *Rod Stewart,* sans *the voice. Teen Dream Ratings: John Travolta—5; Henry Winkler—7; Willie Aames—8; Leif Garrett—9.*

which are not all that different from Kiss'. Originally a gay-oriented group, they're now another frenzied phenomenon of Middle America. They can't be classified as a teen group, though, because their audience spans several age groups.

Kiss *is* a teen group, but it's managed to attract enough older young people to already account for more longevity than ninety percent of the other teen faves. No one is more flitty or unstable than a thirteen-year-old girl who chooses idols the way she chooses lipstick colors—which is why the teen dreams aspire to older, more loyal audiences. Every teen idol wants two things—longevity and a broader audience—but only a handful of them achieve either one.

Only the Paley Brothers—Jonathan and Andy—two blond pretty boys who are up-and-coming on the teen scene, seem to invite the orgiastic fervor of the teen response. "Teens are a great audience," they remarked. "Kids are more critical because they watch TV. Everything they see is professional, slick, and perfect." Otherwise, the general attitude is that the teen audience—which has incredible buying potential, as well as the ability to launch mass media superstars—is desirable, but not enough. "If they're there, let them be there," says Billy or Bobby Alessi. "Let them buy records."

"Every teen idol wants two things—longevity and a broader audience—but only a handful of them achieve either one."

Most of the teen dreams are without girlfriends, which gives the mags the chance to ask repeatedly, "Are *You* the Girl To Mend Andy's Heart?" or "Can *You* Be Shaun's Best Girl?" or "Are *You* Good Enough for Leif?" The first-person writing style is the key, as the magazines reach out to touch the ventricles and auricles of each and every reader with inspirational words of wisdom. Judging from the amount and intensity of the mail we received, we were quite successful at it.

Occasionally, we'd introduce someone new—a rock group or movie actor who'd just burst upon the scene—but for the most part,

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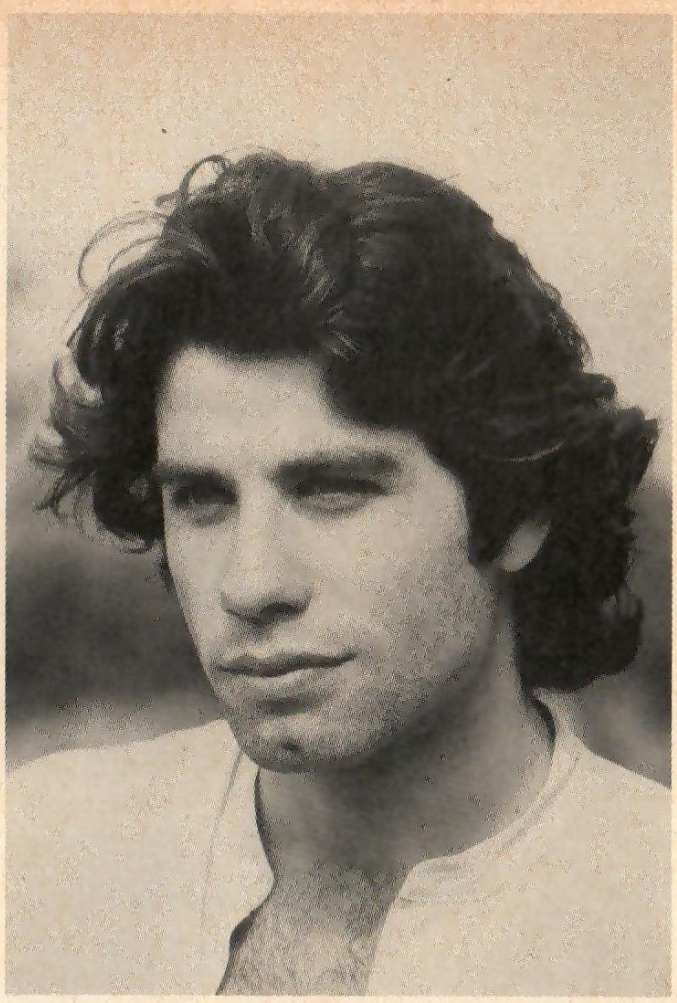

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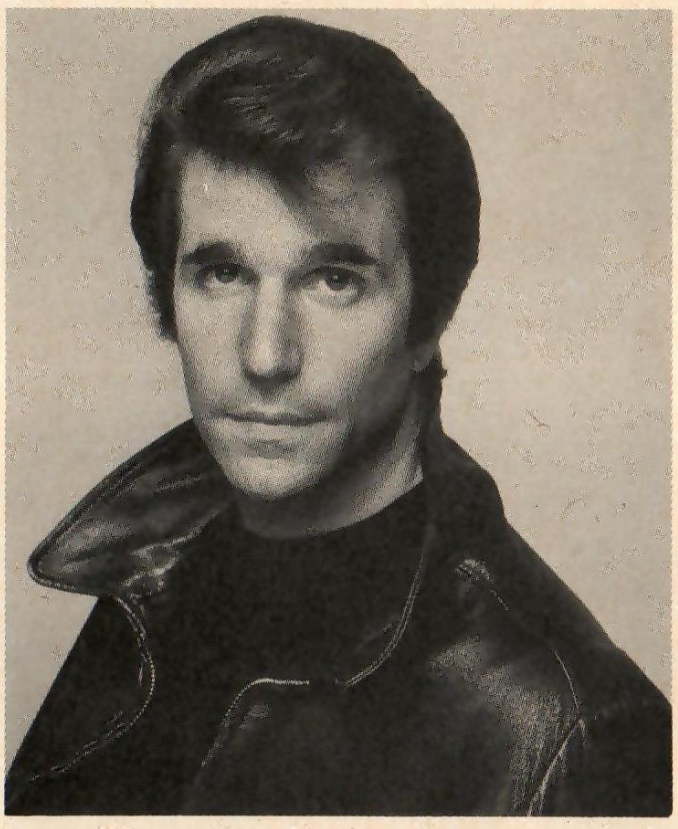

Randi Reisfeld,* 16 *editor: "The girls that read* 16 *[magazine] fantasize, not sexually, but romantically. It's mostly I-want-to-hold-your-hand and dreaming and going off into the sunset."

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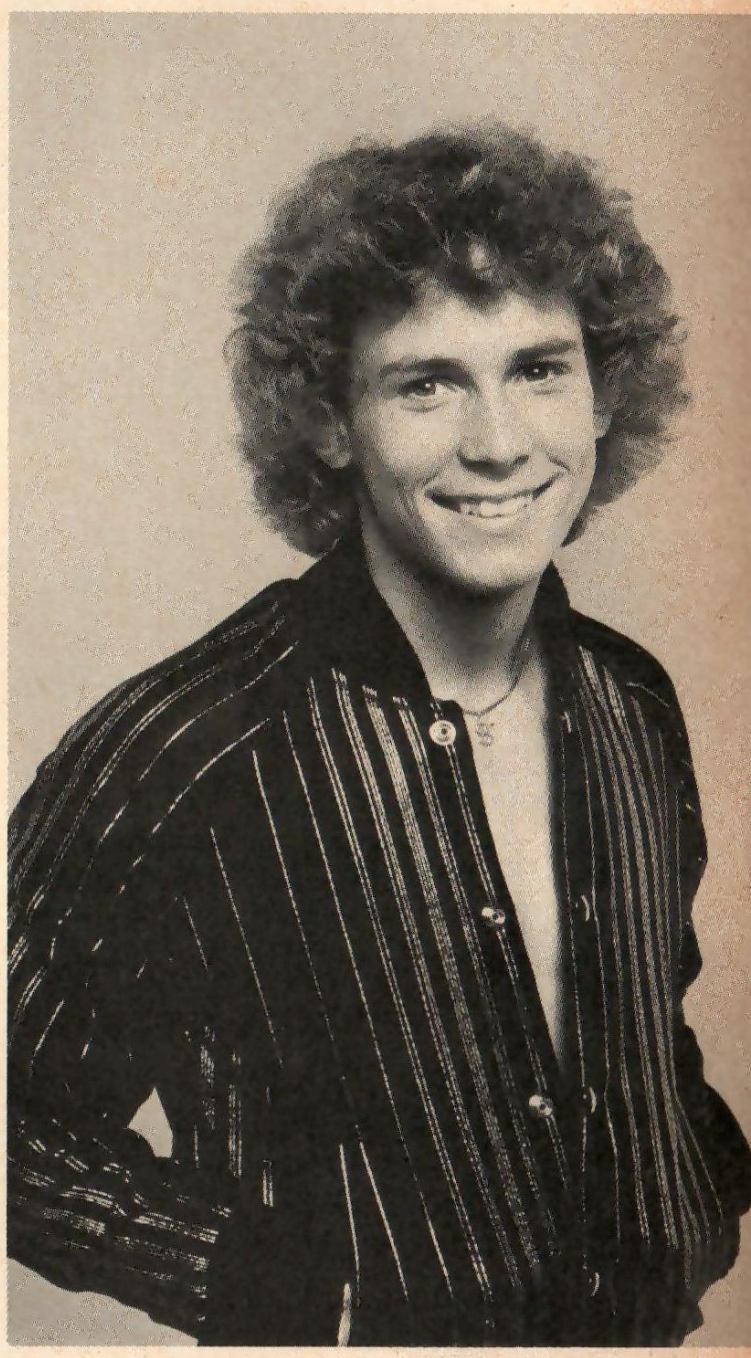


Waring Abbott

the dreams had to be familiar to be appreciated. Records, concerts, and, best of all, a regular TV series contribute to exposure, which contributes to familiarity, which, with the right ingredients, adds up to teen dream-dom.

Very rarely, a group or performer will break the rules and win instant teen celebrity without any exposure outside of the magazines. Such an exception is Virgin, five sun-bleached pretty boys who got tremendous coverage in the magazines before their Gene Simmons-produced album was even in the studio. It's a strange phenomenon, but they were created as a strange phenomenon—a teen band designed to conquer the teen audience. Says Kenny Kerner, one of Virgin's founders, who's also partly responsible, along with Bill Aucoin, for Kiss: "I used to look at the charts every week, and it dawned on me that every year there'd be another teen phenomenon, but never a legitimate, self-contained teen band that would record their own songs, play them in concerts, and play their own instruments. I saw these guys rehearsing at Cherokee Studios, and they looked incredible." In no time at all, a teen phenom was born, photographed in shorts on the beach, and slotted into a tour with Shaun Cassidy. The kids have responded enthusiastically. "Once, two hundred girls were banging on the windows of a restaurant we were in," says lead singer Dirk Etienne. "The hanging plants were falling from the ceiling. We had to be snuck out through the security exit." Does he ever mind the stampede of screaming females? "No. We love that. That's half the fun. They're there for us, and we're there for them." As to the group's music, Etienne insists, "It's not trash. It's not punk rock. And it's teen rock as opposed to teenybopper. It's young music with young lyrics. It's very up—nothing depressing." Even Etienne admitted that at this point the group's appeal has more to do with their look than their music. "It's sexual. The teens live on a sexual level some of the older people don't want to recognize. But what we have is something very, very special. It's there musically as well as visually."

All of which opinions are echoed by Alessi, the twin brothers who sing of lost love and

Brothers make good teen dreams because two heartthrobs are always better than one, especially if they look like they've been cloned off of the same fabulous mold. Hence, the popularity of Alessi (Billy and Bobby, top), Long Island-born twins who graduated from the group Barnaby Bye into a mellow twosome that has conquered Europe but has yet to approach the American battlefront. In a similar vein are the Paley Brothers (left), Jonathan and Andy, who split their time between hanging out with the Patti Smiths and Andy Warhols, and cultivating a teen dream image while touring with the Shaun Cassidys. Teen Dream Ratings: Alessi—7 (3½ each); Paleys—6 (4 each, minus two points for integrity).

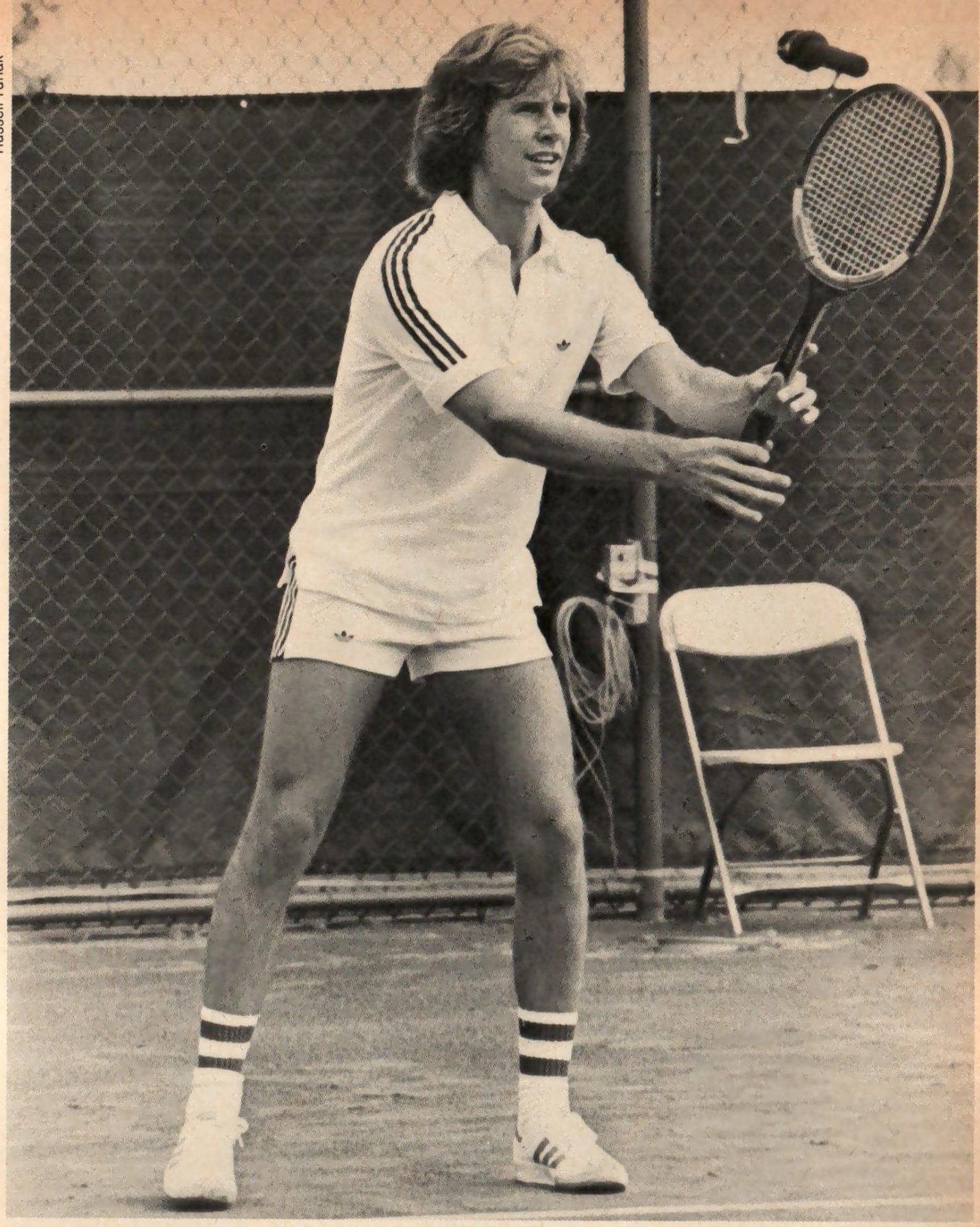
found love and love-hate, and who prove that two teen dreams are better than one. Alessi, at least, do not compromise musical values for teen stardom. They write catchy, romantic music that's destined to take them beyond the "pube" arena and into the pop market. Their success with teens, says Billy or Bobby Alessi, is simply a matter of chance. "It just happened. In fact, A&M Records said at the beginning, 'Look, it'll be our guess that the teen magazines will just slop you right up.' They said, 'If you want, we'll keep everything away from it.' We said, 'Why?' The first album, they didn't want to put our picture on the cover. They said, 'They'll think you're a teenybopper act'." Aptly enough, they compromised—the brothers appeared on the cover in half-face.

"Andy Gibb has all the requisite characteristics for teen dreamdom. . . . He also has chest hair, but has somehow managed to rise above that handicap."

And yet, the appeal of the teen idol is largely, if not purely, sexual. When Shaun's hips swivel and thousands of girls release orgiastic gasps, it's not out of fear that he'll rupture himself—it's out of some kind of subliminal sexual delirium compounded by the thrill of group reaction. And yet most of these girls are too young to even know what they're screaming about. Danny Fields puts it bluntly: "It's *pre*-sexual," he says. "Once the girls become actually sexual, they stop fantasizing—at least I would hope so, for their own healths' sake. But what they want is just to hold hands and kiss. I don't think they think of giving head or anything like that."

The teen fan magazines naturally play up the beefcake element, like pre-pubescent *Playgirl*s, with semi-nude shots of the dreams on the beach, in the bathroom, or, best of all, lying seductively on their beds. Reisfeld insists she's underplayed flesh shots in *16*, but a quick flip through a recent issue brings one upon three pages of a semi-nude Leif Garrett, and a six-page section entitled "*16*'s Adonis Gallery—A Dozen Plus Macho Men For You To Drool Over!" in which everybody from Harry "K.C." Casey to Richard Hatch appears shirtless, or less. "Once we ran a shot of John Travolta by the pool," Danny Fields recalls. "You could see practically every vein of his crotch outlined in his briefs, but there was not a word of protest. Awhile later, we ran a shot of a Bay City Roller who was naked except for a scarf that was draped around his neck and

Russell Turiak



Russell Turiak

As TV's "Hardy Boys" series hits the rocks, will the careers of Parker Stevenson (top) and Shaun Cassidy be washed up too? Does anyone really care? Shaun and Parker do, as they try not only to stay afloat but to go beyond their teen dream limitations as well. History shows that most teen idols never do.

between his legs. It was less revealing, really, than the Travolta shot, but we got incredible protest." The reason? "It showed too much flesh. Girls are scared of the real thing."

I have also worked as an editor of a teen magazine, so I know firsthand all the quirky likes and dislikes of the eight- to fifteen-year-old girls who read nothing but these teen fanzines. Most of the girls, it seems, want enough to fantasize and drool over, but not more. Carrying the fan mentality to a dangerous extreme, they want to know everything imaginable about their "fave hunks"—especially their addresses and phone numbers—and most of them assumed I had more contact with the stars than they did. "My girls," as I affectionately called them, also wanted to know the answers to their innumerable love problems, which I attempted to resolve as well as my limited experience would allow, telling them what Leif or Kristy would do in the same situation. Indeed, a favorite approach of the teen magazines is to use the stars as mouthpieces for constructive life advice, as in "Cheryl Ladd Reveals: How To Cope When Your Friends Hurt You." A lot of the advice is quite fanciful, shall we say, but it's all rather harmless, and gives the teen mags a chance to transcend the fan genre by being educational, at least peripherally.

"As long as what you've created isn't too overwhelming in the talent department, you've got it. A teen dream, that is."

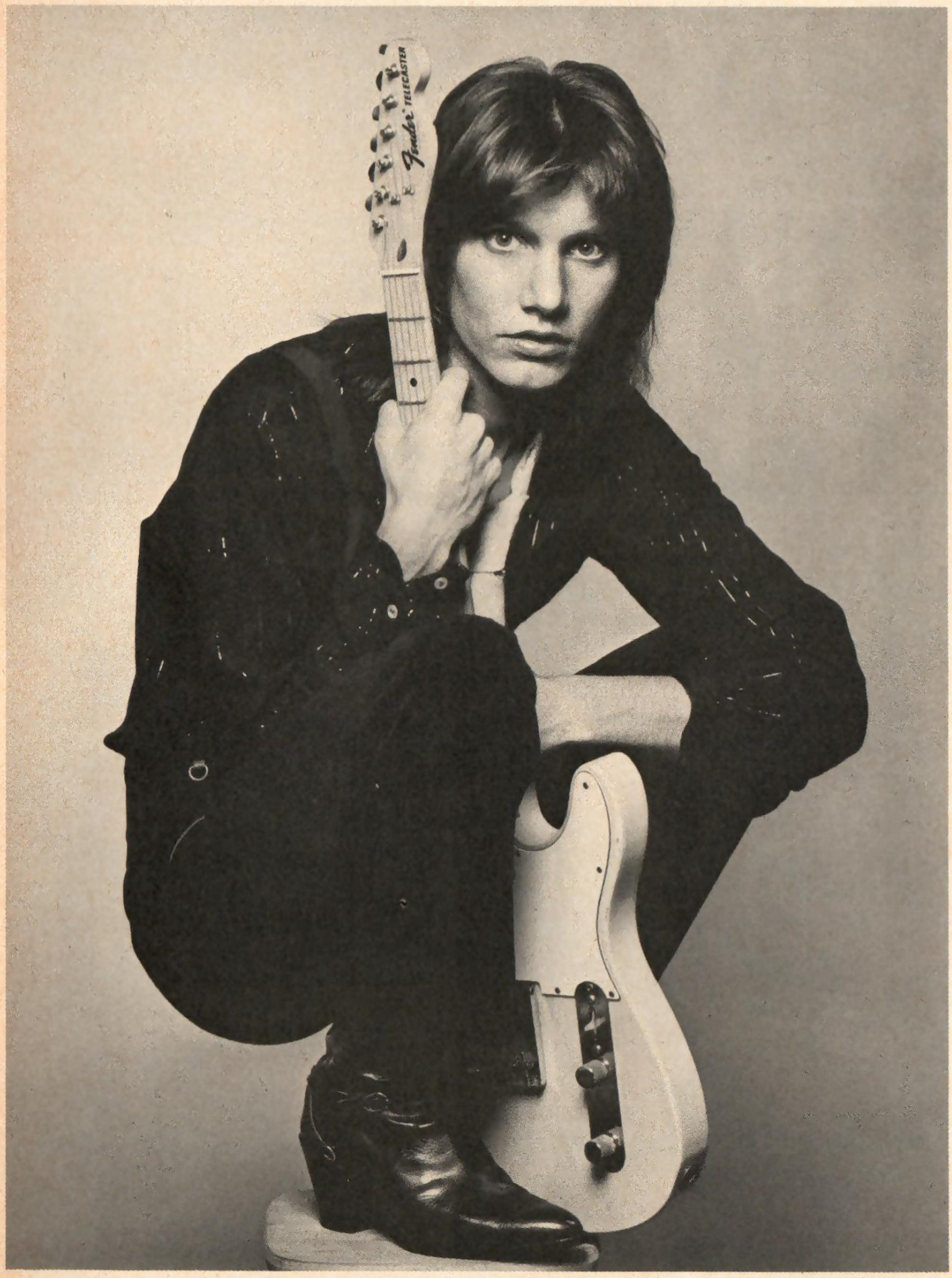
Andy is a typical teen idol in that he never intended to become one, but since he did, he hasn't tried too hard to fight it. Like the other idols, Andy sings of lovey-dovey things while keeping his image pure and viceless. He might seem a bit shallow to more mature audiences, but ex-*16* magazine editor Danny Fields doesn't think so. "All these people are talented," he says. "David Cassidy, for example, is a good actor and a great comedian, which not many people have gotten to see. These people are no more plastic than a Robert Redford or Ali MacGraw." True, perhaps, but then again, can you imagine Parker Stevenson in *All the President's Men* or Marie Osmond in *Goodbye, Columbus*?

Other teen dreams range from blond teen Willie Aames of TV's "Eight Is Enough" to the gangly but cute, perpetual adolescent Robby Benson to Kristy's cocky, skateboarding brother Jimmy McNichol to boyish rock star Peter Frampton—which, as Dorothy Parker would say, runs the gamut from A to B. A few female stars are admired by the teens, but they are only *admired*, not idolized. Kristy McNichol and Debby Boone have the appeal of older sisters, but as they blossom into womanhood, they are losing their chummy quality. Valerie Bertinelli of "One Day at a Time" is still a fun, hip best-friend type who's full of wonderful advice. And Olivia Newton-John, while too old to be sisterly, will be reaping the benefits of her film association with John Travolta for months to come. Still, none of these women can inspire the kind of wild effusion caused by the Bay City Rollers or even Scott Baio, the Italian street kid on "Happy Days." Requisite number one is that teen dreams have to be male, and a certain kind of male at that.

Danny Fields, who now manages the Ramones and Steve Forbert, put his finger on the appeal of the teen dreams: "Most of the boys are cute. They're boy-next-door types. Also, they are so famous and popular that if you were to become their girlfriend, you'd be special. A lot of these girls can only recognize their identity through a male. As backwards as we might find that, it is the prevalent attitude."

The current editor of *16*, the oldest teen magazine which now circulates almost half-a-million copies, is Randi Reisfeld, who claims to be "no psychologist," but happens to be full of her own theories. "I've said this a thousand times," she says. "The girls that read *16* are too old to sit on daddy's knee and too young to date the boy-next-door. They get their heroes not from football, like their brothers, but from TV. They fantasize, not sexually, but romantically. It's mostly I-want-to-hold-your-hand and dreaming and going off into the sunset."

Greg Gorman



When he's not busy looking wistful, Virgin's lead singer Dirk Etienne has opinions about why his group has succeeded with the teen market. "It's young music with young lyrics," he says. "It's very up—nothing depressing."

Possibly the ultimate teen dream, Shaun Cassidy writhes, wriggles, and jumps through hoops to satisfy his fans. When they stop screaming, he hopes he won't find himself where his half-brother David ended up when his teen dream-dom expired—nowhere. Teen Dream Rating 11 (one extra credit for effort). (Photo by Chip Rock/Lynn Goldsmith)

New! The string tie. The city-cowboy ten-galloner. The pleated formal Van Heusen shirt worn informally by Eric Stevens. Just add jeans and a casual stance.

New! The smallest wing-collar ever (lower left, Van Heusen again) that is not a bit overpowered by that skinny tie. Mix with a corduroy or linen jacket (collar up, of course) and push up the sleeves.

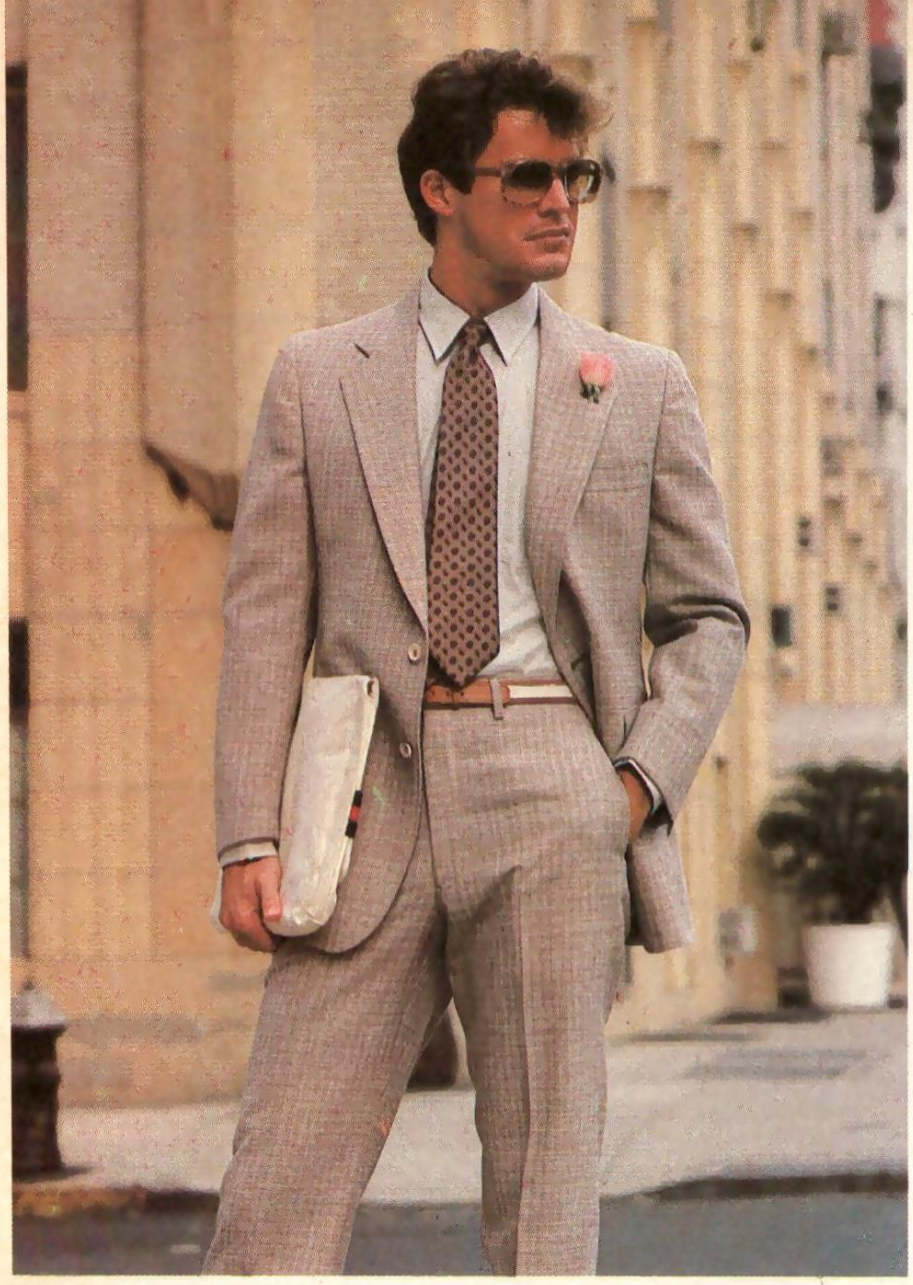
FASHION: **SPRINGING THE TRENDY-TRADITIONAL LOOK**

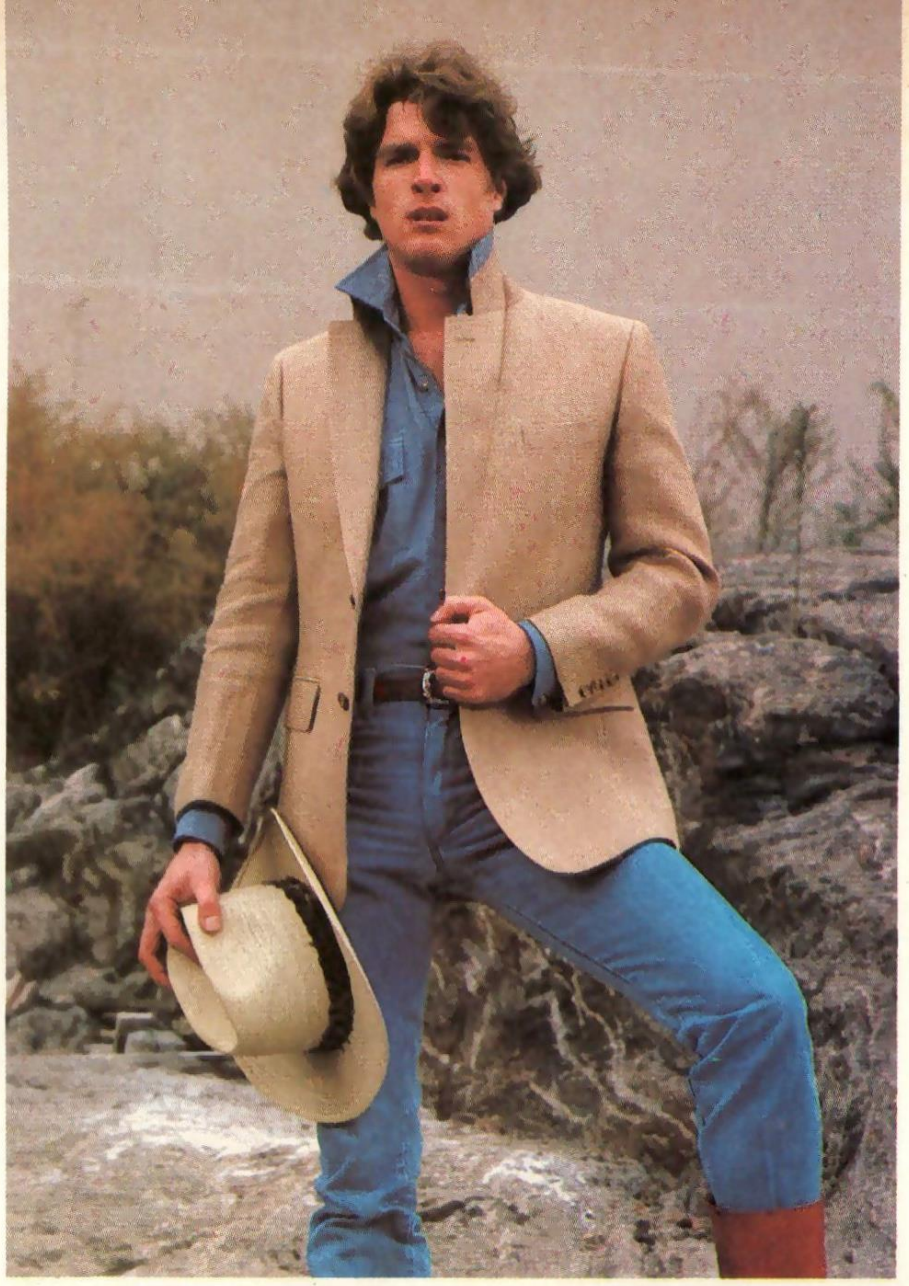
by Jason Thomas

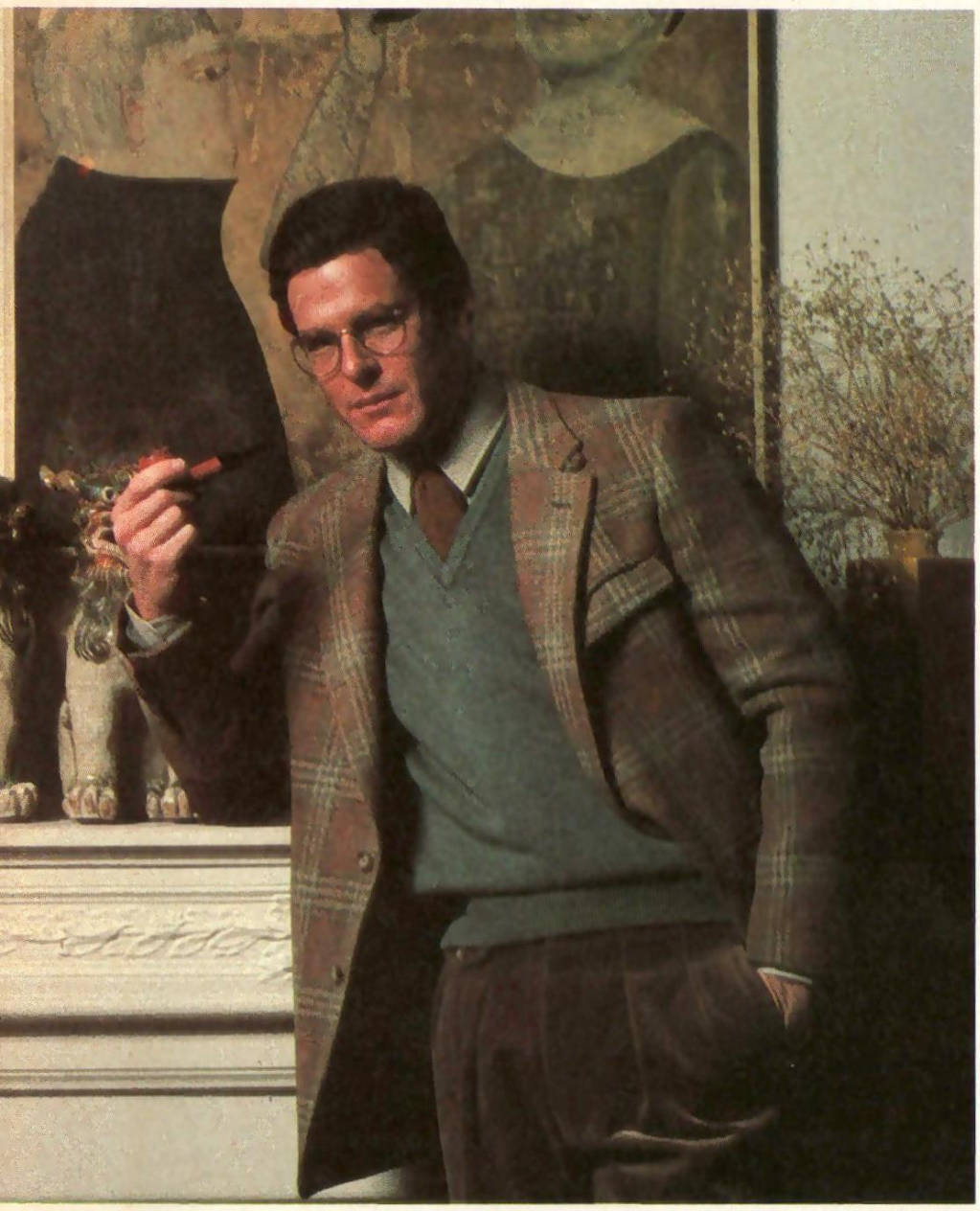
photos by Kenn Duncan

New! More small collars. A reserved summer stripe in the Cricketeer jacket. A bow tie. And a dramatic scarf that had better be cashmere. A dried flower lasts longer than a carnation.

There is a lot of noise in the fashion world today about the "Great Return to Traditional Look." It seems that we are all supposed to be rushing back to more elegant times when







More New!! The "parquet" weave (upper left) of wool and linen is closely shaped by Country Britches to prove that an office look does not have to be dull. Bob McAuliffe wears burlap in a traditionally cut sport jacket (upper right) by Country Britches. The country or college look on Richard Smith, photographed at Key West's La Casa Pobre (lower left) is not the same anymore either; the pants are pleated rose velvet, the jacket is a rust and rose Harris tweed, the sweater is rusty rose, and the tie is a solid knit. Or try a businesslike pinstripe dress shirt (Van Heusen) with a slim tie and pin, as model Eric Stevens does while enjoying a leisurely afternoon at the restaurant, Claire, in Key West.
Still More New!! Eric Stevens wears the revival of the polkadot bow with the Van Heusen dress shirt with contrasting collar. Match the hat to the collar.

gentlemen wore things called boaters or very very tweeds.

This is partially correct.

But while there is a lot of reviving of quality fabrics, a lot of attention to better fit and shape, and a return to some degree of formality, the man who looks to thirty-five-year-old issues of magazines for his inspiration will end up looking about thirty-five years out-of-date.

The difference is the way clothes are combined.

The smaller collar on shirts is a recent revival, but that collar can be overpowered by a massive silk tie. The inch-or-so knit tie is fine. The tiny bow is all right for anyone who can wear it casually and not smirk a lot. Even an inch-wide strip of ribbon can be tied Western style in place of neckwear.

Wrinkles can be expected. So encourage them. Push back the sleeves of those linen or cotten sports jackets so that the wrinkles start where you want them. Also, wear collars up, so long as they are the narrow lapel collars and not the old massive lapels which will flap and droop.

Own at least one cowboy hat.

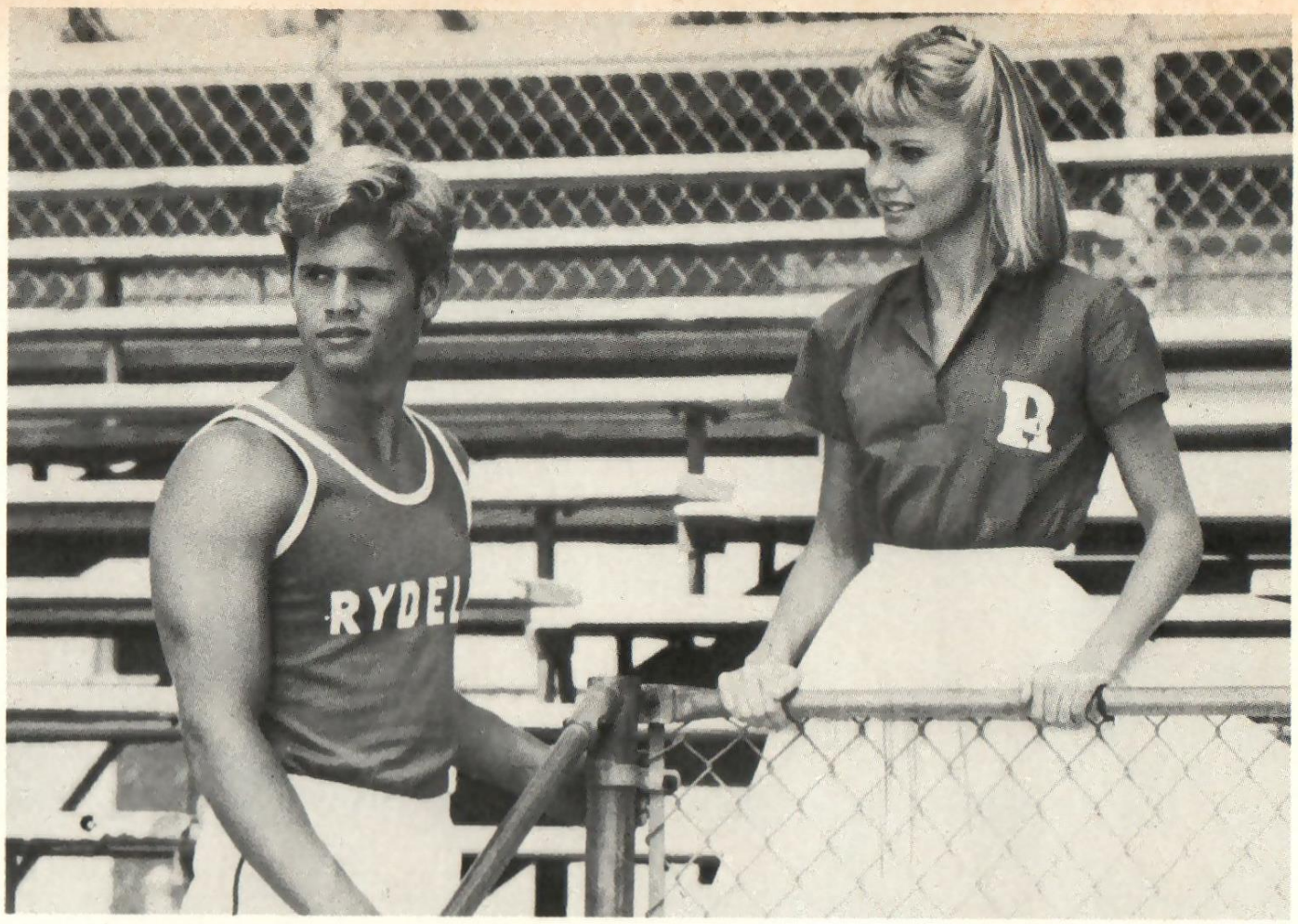
Cowboy boots have become another must. They are expensive, ranging from $100 to $1,000, but the best wearing and most fashionable at this moment are made of lizard. Those tough little creatures with the "gatorish" hides produce skins that seem to last forever, and look better when they are a bit battered and scuffed.

Perfect for subway riding.

So you really want to know how to be fashion perfect this spring? Get a nice tweed jacket that fits very tightly. Add a few shirts with collars so small that your grandfather will positively mist over with sentimentality. Hang a few skinny ties around your neck. Use a pair of cowboy boots made from some small and ugly animal as a foundation. And top everything with a cowboy hat.

It's all very traditional. Just a blend of different traditions.

And Most New!!! It takes verve to wear two-toned shoes the way Tony Stefano does. But then, he knows his silk, wool, and linen weave sport jacket with small lapels (Country Britches) is perfectly mixed with the rounded collar, skinny tie, and straw hat. And for the ultimate city cowboy, here Richard Smith takes his western-cut wool and cotton jacket (Country Britches) and his cowboy hat for a night that will be far from where the buffalo roam.



LORENZO LAMAS: **JOCK OF ALL TRADES**

by Norma McLain Stoop

A tall, yellow-haired kid who was excited to death about his big chance before the cameras when I talked with him on the set of *Grease* about two years ago, Lorenzo Lamas—in New York for the screening of his starring movie vehicle *Take Down*—is another cup of tea altogether: stronger and more pungent. Poised and gracious, his powerful six-foot-two frame encased in a beautifully tailored, dark three-piece suit, the twenty-one-year-old actor, with his dark brown hair rather conservatively cut, gives burgeoning promise of the style and elegance of his celebrated father Fernando Lamas.

At an early age, with a tiny part in a big film behind him, and with his hair its natural color, he's the dream jock type for fluttery high school girls, as well as the many Mrs. Robinsons around the nation. But he stoutly maintains that "I would have dyed my hair *green* to be in *Grease*. They told me to gain twenty pounds and dye my hair blond, I think so I wouldn't compete with John Travolta, because we *do* look somewhat alike in certain respects. I was happy to, because, though the role was small, it gave me a lot of exposure. Now, the kids know me," he says contentedly.

The kids will know him even better now that Buena Vista's *Take Down* has been released. There is an infectious vitality enlivening every frame of the film about the unlikely subject of high school wrestling, so gently unostentatious and so honestly directed and acted that it is truly refreshing. It tells a story simple in format but so emotionally convincing that not only the young (who are bound to revel in it), but the general public will take its appealing characters to their hearts. Besides being fun, there is a rich vein of dignity in the modest manner in which the story is presented.

A pompous egghead, longing for his upcoming appointment as an instructor at Harvard, is unwillingly roped in as wrestling coach at the two-by-four Mingo Junction High School. Knowing nothing about the sport, but fast realizing that the boys he's coaching are headed for the loss of most of their matches, he puts his keen brain to work to reverse the situation. Edward Herrmann is grand as the coach, and the growth of his character makes it clear that his entire viewpoint toward life has been changed by this chance introduction to a world he never knew. Kathleen Lloyd is very good as his wife, who disagrees with the idea that having a baby right away will hamper his career. In the well-conceived and tightly written screenplay by Keith Merrill and Eric Hendershot, each boy on the team is given a well-rounded character replete with intelligently thought-out motivations and responses which the actors, especially Kevin Hooks, Vincent Roberts, Nick Beauvy, and Salvador Feliciano, flesh out very well. But it is tall, handsome Lorenzo Lamas, with his striking appearance and youthful energy, that helps make *Take Down* a rewarding experience. It's surprising that one so young already has such a commanding presence, and it is exciting to see a talent hatch so decisively.

Lamas plays a poor boy from a deplorable family background, grappling desperately with problems of home, school grades, first love, and athletic achievements. One is drawn more and more to him as he tastes failure, success, failure, and final success.

Upcoming for Lamas is *Tilt*, in which he laughingly declares that producer-director-writer Rudy Durand "felt I was just right for the part of a kind of obnoxious, know-it-all kid who is a reigning pinball champion until little Brookie Shields comes to town, beats him, takes all his money, and leaves!"

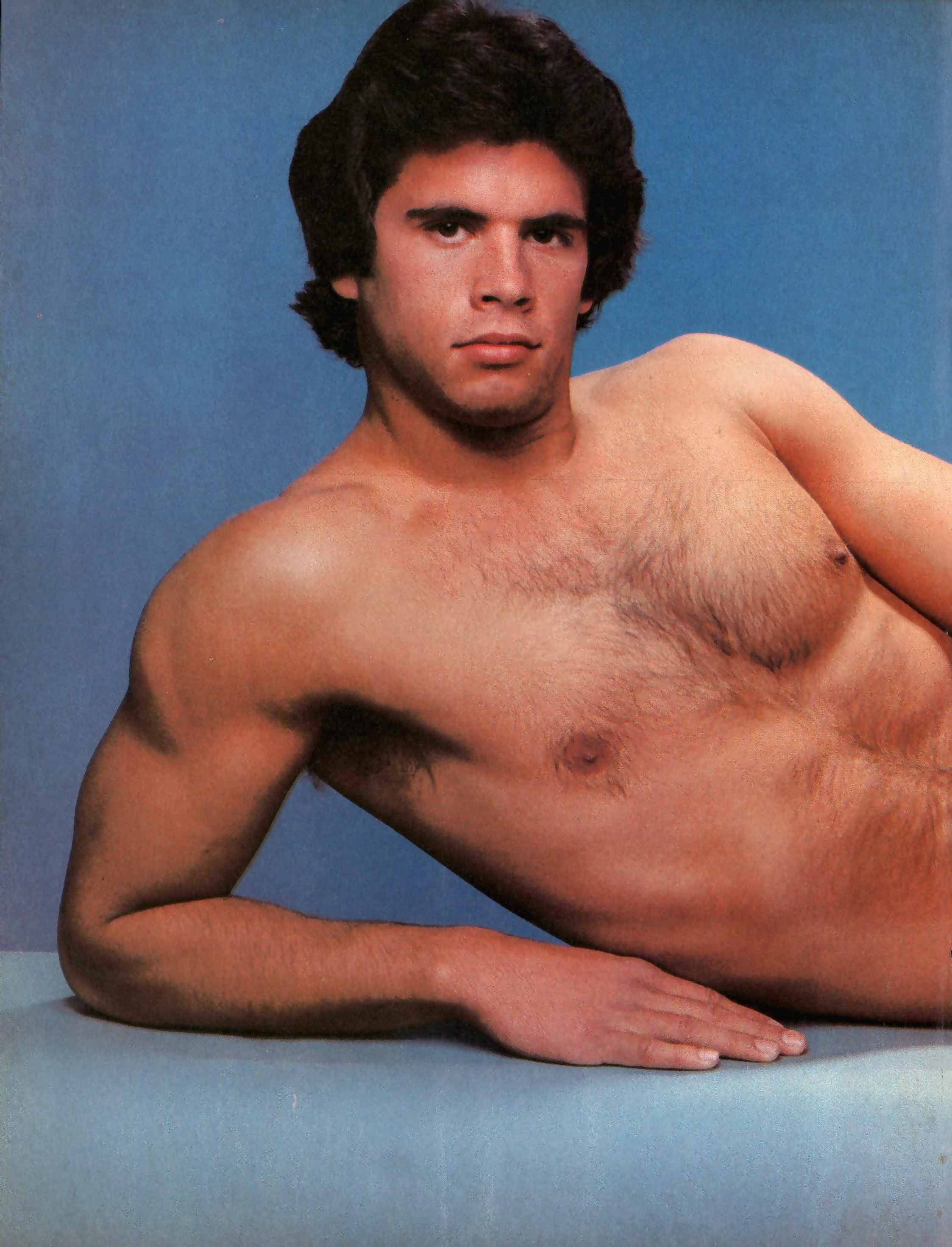
In the rather serious film *Promises in the Dark*, also scheduled for 1979, Lamas undertakes a dramatic but very small role purely for the opportunity to work for Jerome Hellman, who produced *Midnight Cowboy* and other important films. "I play a high school hero type of athlete," he says, "coping with the illness of a very good friend, a girl played by Kathleen Beller. The role is so small that I won't receive any billing for it."

But Lamas stars in *The All-Americans*, which begins shooting this month. The film, like *Take Down*, deals with the love story of a poor boy and a privileged girl. But this time, he explains, "it's more involved with my character, instead of the team and the coach and everybody else."

In *Grease*, Lamas played a high school jock; in *Take Down*, a high school wrestler; in *Promises in the Dark*, a high school football player; nothing more athletic than a pinball champion in *Tilt*, but in *All-Americans*, though he graduates to college sports, he's a football player again. Despite his muscles, his letter-winning, prep school wrestling, football, and swimming, his karate purple belt, and his constant weight lifting and surfing, isn't this stress on his muscles, reflexes, and co-ordination beginning to worry him? "I think it's really a matter of coincidence," he says thoughtfully, "that all these jock roles are coming up. Of course I'm looking forward to purely dramatic parts, but I don't mind playing an athlete, because I'm a very physical person who's very active in sports. But I *do* like the athlete I play to have some underlying sensitivity or problem he's dealing with upstairs in his mind, rather than just memorizing play patterns or going down the field and catching a pass." The boy, Nick Kilvitus, that he plays in *Take Down*, has the underlying sensitivity that Lamas demands.

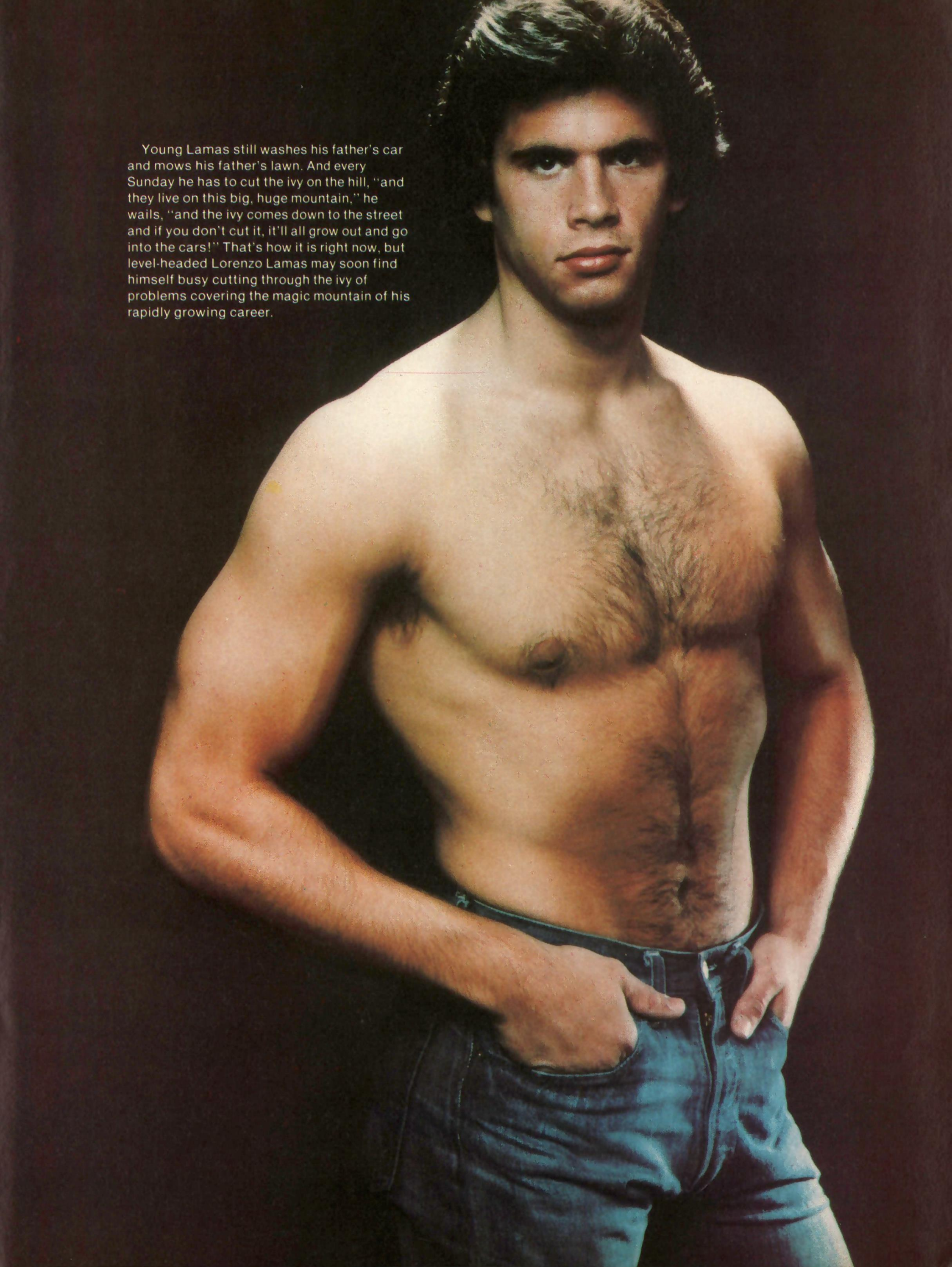
Lorenzo Lamas' strapping good looks make him a natural to play the high school jock, which he did in the blockbuster Grease *(at left, with Olivia Newton-John and a little bit of hair dye) and* Take Down *(far left), a new Buena Vista release about wrestlers yearning to be champions. Maureen McCormick is featured as Lamas' girlfriend in the film.*

studio portraits by Jack Mitchell



The charmingly unpretentious movie gives one the chance to get the special thrill of seeing this young actor who has an elusive quality that may well make him a star.

But Lamas is aware of the dangers of too much too fast. He feels his advantage is having been raised with three stars shining in the firmament of his family: his father, Fernando Lamas, his mother, Arlene Dahl, and his stepmother, Esther Williams. "It's a business, like anything else," he insists, "and if you're fortunate enough to be a success in it, well, that's fine. Having been brought up in the business, I'm insulated against some of the risks that are routine for actors who've had success thrown at them too fast, and have a problem controlling how it makes them feel inside. But I *know* we're not doing anything terribly important; we're not working on the cure for muscular dystrophy. We shouldn't feel that we're special, because we're *not*. That's where Dad and Esther come in. They keep my feet on the ground."



Young Lamas still washes his father's car and mows his father's lawn. And every Sunday he has to cut the ivy on the hill, "and they live on this big, huge mountain," he wails, "and the ivy comes down to the street and if you don't cut it, it'll all grow out and go into the cars!" That's how it is right now, but level-headed Lorenzo Lamas may soon find himself busy cutting through the ivy of problems covering the magic mountain of his rapidly growing career.

RAUCOUS AND ROLLER DISCO:

CIRCUS SEXIMUS

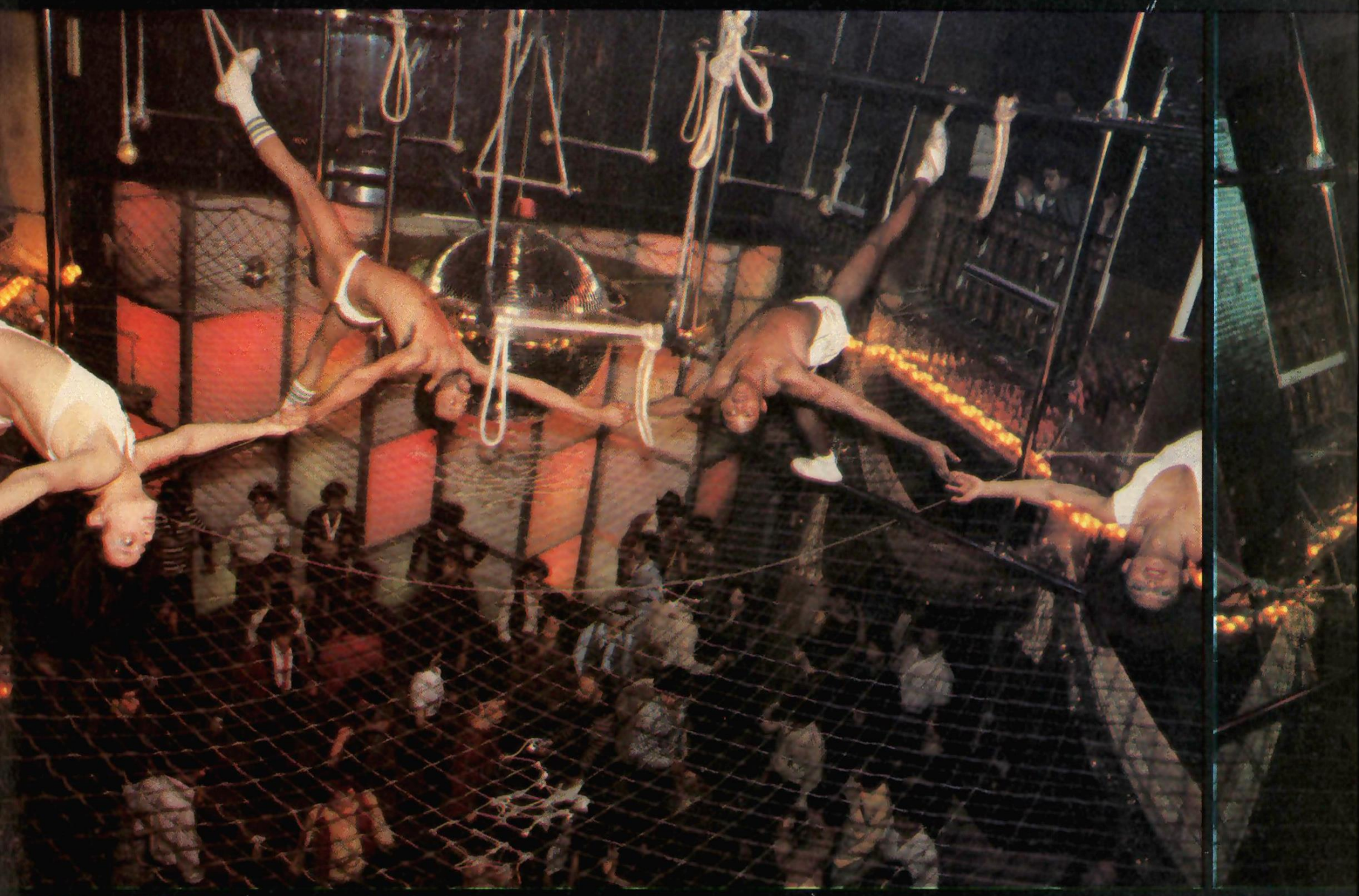
by Patrick Pacheco
photos by Mario Ruiz

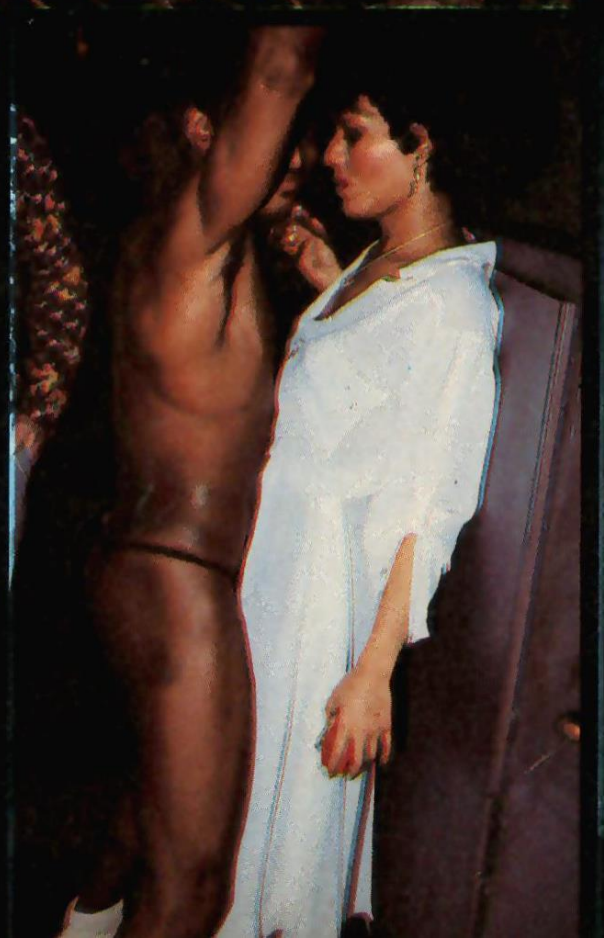
Spinning, whirling, and flying through Barnum's belfry, the Disco Bats become human cogs in the technological dazzle of the disco environment. Bartender Wayne wears his heart and money on his sleeve (lower left) while patrons of every friendly persuasion enjoy the kaleidoscopic thrills that the G.G. Barnum Room has to offer.

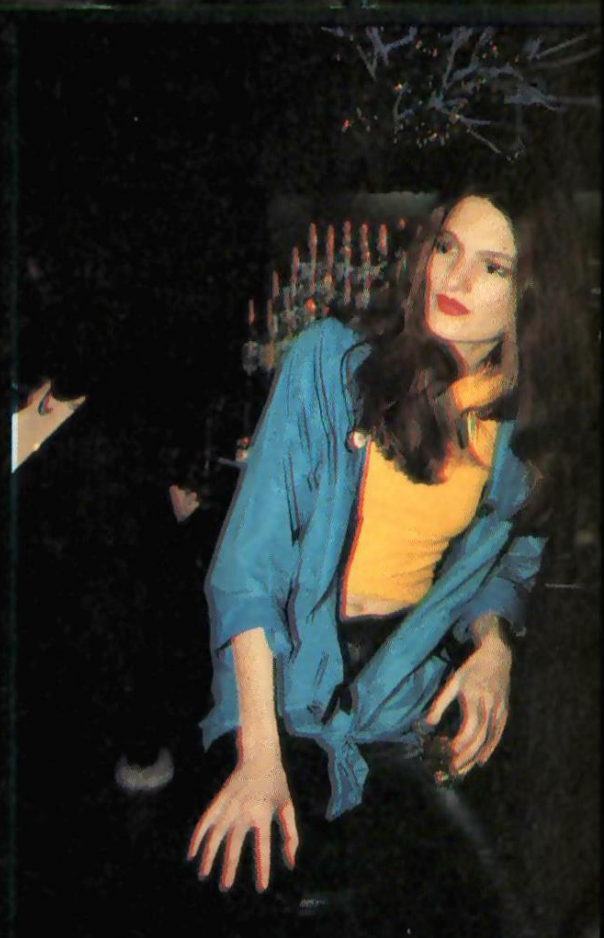
MORE THAN DANCING

Walking into the G.G. Barnum Room is like falling under the lunatic spell of a full moon. Tall Puerto Rican drag queens bounce on the gabardined laps of Wall Street businessmen. Heavy-lidded hustlers, cigarettes dangling from their sultry lips, brush up against Park Avenue matrons. Sleazy low-lifes tangle and tango the night away with the pouty Pucci set in a maze of rooms that glows with the decadent amber of the fifth ring of Dante's Inferno. The irresistible currents that sweep the thrill-seeker into an engulfing tide of visceral delights flow through three different rooms in this kinky wonderland in the heart of New York's Times Square.

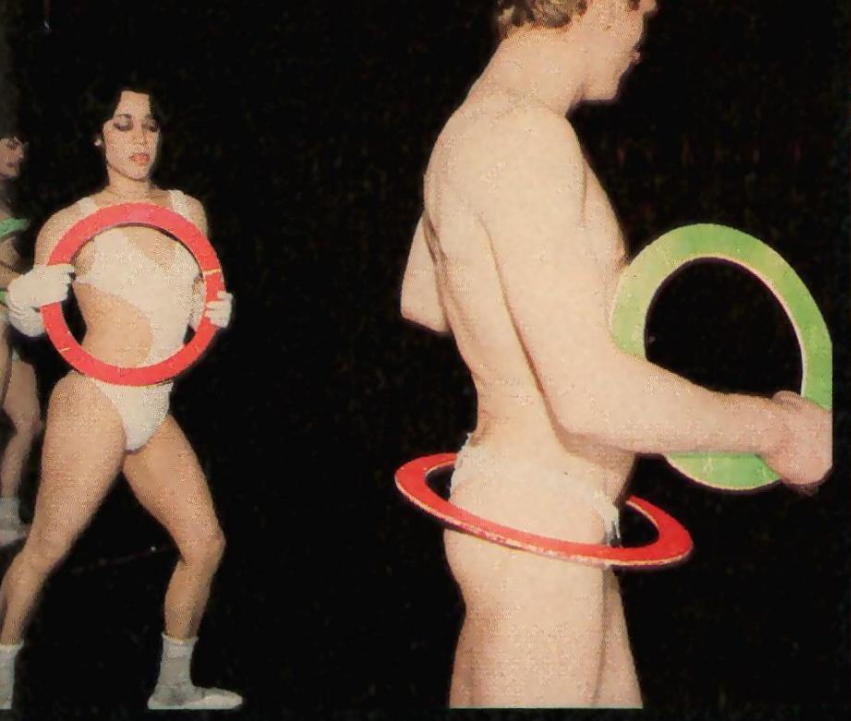
The centerpiece is, of course, the Barnum







In this kinky wonderland off Times Square, a variety of Alices romp through a mad disco tea party where everything and anything can happen. Alternating teams of Disco Bats keep the action hot and high until the early morning hours.



Room, a high-ceilinged space with balconies, intersected with a net that separates the dancing public from the Disco Bats, the spangled aerialists who fly from trapezes and dance against a bank of neon and flashing lights. Ripe, brown bodies or milky, blond ones comprising the three sexes are squeezed into bikinis, and the undulating figures spin through ensemble dance routines that send them tumbling into the net in simulated orgiastic couplings and pelvic-swinging contortions never recorded in the *Kama Sutra*.

Miss Peter's TV Theatre, another disco space with its own disc jockey and sound system, lies adjacent through double doors guarded by the hulking, beefy bouncers, Cerberuses to this Plutonian underworld where patrons can disco in a more intimate atmosphere. "Miss Peter" is the sobriquet for the formidable diva who coordinates the shows that hold centerstage at those times when the disco is not operating in the room. The shows, not exactly the garden-variety "This Is My Life" type of lip-syncing, are monitored, taped, and played back on closed-circuit screens in the Barnum Room. Miss Peter adapts musicals and tailors them to the particular talents of his large family, and when they are not kicking up their heels in *Cabaret*, there are the more familiar pantomime shows in which the girls torch their way through *angst*-filled ballads and pop hits.

Just off this disco showplace, rows of primping transvestites and smooth-talking lounge lizards perch along a long bar, the Ambassador Lounge, periodically scanning the incessant flow of traffic that slips from one room into another. Humid with a reckless sensuality, this lavender cocoon is spun from the same aboriginal energies that infected the Barnum Room's parent bar, noted in the G.G. initials that precede its current name. For it was at the Gilded Grape on Eighth Avenue where these disenfranchised street children first gathered to lighten the shadows of their lives in the comforting company of people who shared their sympathies.

In 1972, Jerry Cohn, the reigning impresario and colorful entrepreneur of the Barnum Room, opened the Gilded Grape, which soon became the home for an element in gay society which had frequently been shunted aside as an embarrassment. Heading a successful display and promotion company with a list of prestigious clients, Cohn entered the bar business as a lark to make money, a sideline in which he could put some of his marketing theories into practice. A palace of tack and sleaze, the Grape quickly encountered the enmity of the local police precinct and the State Liquor Authority, as well as the neighborhood pimps and whores who saw the transvestites as competition. "It got to the point, honey," noted one brassy blonde in a magazine article, "that you couldn't *give* pussy away on that street." The bar received an inordinate amount of harassment, and Cohn was constantly summoned and subpoenaed to defend his club in court to the tune of thousands of dollars in legal fees. He could dip into his pockets since the portly johns and curiosity-seekers were making him rich buying drinks for the boys and "girls" who were joining the family at the Grape at an amazing rate. Cohn, with his manipulative charm and aggressively articulated forcefulness, became the patriarchal figure for the raucous clientele, many of whom came from distorted and fragmented backgrounds. ("They do what Daddy tells them," he says of the present Barnum crowd.) The shows, which became a staple of life there; organically grew out of the hothouse environment, where half of the place invariably sang along when the songs of the reigning pop queens blared from the juke box.

Primly seated at the long bar at Barnum's, Lorraine of the Long Lashes recalls those early days with a misty nostalgia that threatens to make a mess of the mascara job that took up most of her afternoon. "Well, darling, what can I tell you to describe the madness of my callow youth at the Grape. I lived there for the first two months I was in New York, *literally* lived there. I had just got off the bus from some shithole in Louisiana, and was walking up Eighth Avenue when some queens standing in front of the Grape dished my mesh stockings—and they were my good pair, too—and we started talking and went into the bar. Well, I never saw so many ugly girls in all my life—I was a raving beauty compared to the trash I saw in there. So I parked my Louis Vuitton case in a corner, and held court for the rest of the evening, and the next evening, and the next, and the next." Lorraine pauses, picks up a cigarette, and waits for one of the surrounding gentlemen to light it for her. Despite the fact that she is close to six feet tall and broad-shouldered, she is content to preserve an antiquated femininity that has long since been leveled by women's liberation. Daintily flicking an an ash from her gold lamé pants and crossing her legs to better show off her stiletto pumps, she continues: "All the girls you see up and down this bar were at the Grape, and a lot of the boys, too. It's still the same in many ways as it was then, except that it was more of a clique, a family then. There weren't any of these straights or ritzy types either. Honey, you didn't go into the Grape unless you meant business. I don't mind the straights being here at all. It's my turf, my stomping grounds, and they know it. They're the ones who are freaky, not me." The attractive young guy with drug-glazed eyes sitting next to her at the bar offers that she resembles Dionne Warwick. "Oh, yes," Lorraine flutters, dabbing at her high cheekbones as she drops her hand on his

Before Infinity became Disco Inferno, Good Skates, a roller skating outfit, hosted nights of dancing on wheels—a flashy fad that has America rolling again.

photos by Jeffrey Tennyson

thigh. "I hear that all the time."

One gets the impression in talking to many of the Forty-fifth Street regulars that the heady atmosphere offers a license to exaggerate or even fabricate their life story. Illusion is the norm here.

In 1977, Cohn cried uncle to the half nelson applied by the police and SLA, and closed down the Grape. Meanwhile, business at Hollywood, a cha cha palace for black and Puerto Rican gays, had dwindled to the point that owners Abe Glanstein and Herb Taylor were anxious to attract the now homeless Grape crowd. Word went out through the grapevine that the newly-christened G.G. Knickerbocker was the watering hole for the girls and guys who wanted to party. Unsurprisingly, the influential pseudo-guru and father-confessor for the kids, Jerry Cohn, was named "artistic consultant" for the place.

It was here on Wednesday nights that one could witness the most galvanic go-go boy and go-go girl contests, presided over by the flamboyant Timmy Scott, one of Jerry Cohn's close associates at the Grape. Rowdy crowds would pack the back room of the G.G. Knickerbocker to watch streetwise punks and transvestites strip down to briefs or G-strings while going through hip-swiveling gyrations that had them undulating along the floor, or swinging from the pipes that were exposed along the ceiling. Wild cheers from the crowd were punctuated by the occasional march up to the stage to stuff dollar bills into the pulsating crotch, boot, or bra of the dancer. It was out of these shows that many of the Disco Bats, who are now seen swinging from the ceiling of the Barnum Room, came. If things threatened to get out of hand, as they frequently did, Timmy Scott, who recently died of a heart attack, was there with a chillingly uttered putdown to get things back on the right track.

"It was Timmy Scott who kept everything together and cool," recalls a handsome young Puerto Rican, who won many Wednesday night competitions. "If the purse wasn't large enough, Timmy would bug and dish the audience until they'd put in something. He was like a den mother to all of us. I never felt ripped off or cheated or anything like that. It was almost the opposite, like I was getting money to do what I'd do anyway—dance. I really get off on people watching me swinging around up there, 'cause I've always dreamed of being a star. I get lots of offers for private sessions, but I don't dig that stuff. You wouldn't believe who I get propositioned by, though. They're like these really rich dames, and they get all pissed off when I tell 'em I'm a happily married man with three children. No way, man, I just love to see the expression on their faces."

The Barnum Room is a voyeur's paradise, simply because exhibitionism—in the swings, on the dance floor, in Miss Peter's TV Room, and at the bar—is rampant. In an age in which celebrity is within everybody's grasp, Barnum's is a perfect forum in which

to indulge one's fantasies to the limit. Talk to any of the Barnum regulars and one will find a group of people who are intent on pursuing stardom in recording, films, theater, and the opera. While they may not be taking voice or dance lessons, or pounding the pavement pursuing auditions, or doing any of the requisite nitty-gritty work, they have got down pat what they consider a star's aura. They may not know how to perform, but they do know how to take a bow, or imperiously demand a drink from their prince consort. Their hauteur comes from hours of primping before a mirror in preparation for the only salutary hours of their existence, spent propped up at Barnum's, their helplessness from the aping of the countless heroines they have observed in the yellowing films of the early morning hours, their toughness from the hard-edged competition on which they thrive. There are contests at Barnum's at the drop of a hat—Mr. G.G., Miss G.G., the Superstar Awards, leading up to the Broadway Awards, the Barnum Oscars for pantomime and entertainment, named after a Miss Broadway, the tragic victim of cancer.

Life at Barnum's is a fascinating mixture of artifice and true grit. Delilah is a black drag from Trinidad, who eats "Ludes" and listens with rapt attention to the fat, bucktoothed man rubbing against her. Looking like Billy Carter, he interminably chews her ear off about a wife who doesn't understand him, a job that is unfulfilling, and children who weren't worth the investment. Picking the lint off his lapel, she listens sympathetically, tells him he dances beautifully, and strokes his thigh soothingly until he finally heads home to Scarsdale. "Comfort, that's what a woman is made for, honey," she lilts as her man walks away. Tossing her head and pulling it back like Diana Ross, she adds, "Women are so confused today, they make the man confused. I know what kind of woman I am, and I make a man know what kind of man he is. It's all emotional. All of my men are straight and they don't care if I got eight inches dangling between my legs. They just put it out of the way and go to—or they like it and *I* go to, if you catch my drift." Delilah is interrupted by the abrupt return of the Billy Carter clone accompanied by the club manager.

"Did you take this man's wallet?" asks the manager brusquely, well seasoned for these kind of confrontations. Rising up to meet the glare of the injured party, Delilah vehemently denies it, like Susan Hayward on the stand in *I Want To Live!* As the man insultingly presses the charge, Delilah becomes increasingly unladylike. "You mothafucka, you asshole limp dick. How dare you accuse me of stealing your money!" She launches into a tirade of expletives and other scatological references, until, exasperated, she hauls off and lands a roundhouse punch on her erstwhile gentleman caller. In a split second, two beefy bouncers are on the scene hustling away the disorderly duo. Frilly and feminine, or not, most of these girls are hard alley cats who eat gonads for breakfast.

"Those incidents are really rare at Barnum's—usually it's just a matter of keeping the public from jumping in the nets or swinging on the trapezes," says Jerry Cohn, speaking from the leather and shag interiors of his offices at Jericho Display. While religious music is incongruously piped through the room, the imposing, sharp impresario discusses the unpredictable and eclectic success of his enterprise on West Forty-fifth Street. "The word *freak* isn't in my vocabulary. I wanted a place where people could be who they were or who they wanted to be without any recriminations or pressures."

Cohn created an environment revolving around his theory that disco is a religious experience—a devotional exercise to a technological god of the machine. To the sound and lighting, he added the human element of the dancers working within the electronic abstractions. He sees it as a kind of upmanship against the encroaching tyranny of the machine over human life. The interrelationship between the circus and the disco is compatible and convivial, notes Cohn. The childlike euphoria that the disco induces is really a very primal experience—that's why it approaches a religious one. "We still live in an era of devils and dybbuks. What we no longer have is the religion to cope with those forces in society. The dybbuk has become the machine. Disco is one way of coming to terms with that dybbuk."

Whatever grace is to be found in an environment as decadent and alluring as Barnum's stems from the sheer vitality and affirmation that comes from people living out who they truly believe themselves to be. The private tragedies of the boy behind the thick makeup or the zonked-out hustler are obscured in the mad rush to glitter and glitz in a hedonistic culture. Yet, the artifice and ambiguity may provide the best metaphor for the confusion and uncertainty of contemporary society and the answer to why the bid to lose oneself in the circus pageantry of such a place is so enticing—and so desperate.

BOOGIE ON WHEELS

Before it became "disco inferno," Infinity, the popular dance palace in New York's Greenwich Village, hosted nights of roller-skating disco under the auspices of Good Skates, Inc., an organization devoted to the promulgation of boogie on wheels. While Donna Summer and Brooklyn Dreams wailed out on "Heaven Knows" and a jungle of neon blazed frenetically, skaters thundered across the hardwood floors, some precariously teetering close to the edge, while others bobbed and weaved, flipped and turned like rollered Dorothy Hamills and John Currys. Long and narrow, the shape of the room required a sharp turn at either end, and bottlenecks invariably occurred. The less experienced skater who wobbled well enough along the stretches, gritted his or her teeth, and, with furrowed brow, anticipated the euphemistic "dead man's curve." Frequently, they emerged unscathed from the tight squeeze. But just as often, one hapless victim or the other would slam into the carpeted wall, or miss the curve entirely and continue rolling past the checkroom and into the street. Or one might richochet against fellow skaters and innocent bystanders and have to be extricated from a pileup of extended limbs and bodies. If one were selective about whom they rolled into or whom they chose to grab as they felt an irreversible pull of gravity, one chanced upon a most magnetic charm of roller skating.

But whether one goes to cruise on wheels, get some wholesome exercise, or embellish their dancing with a twist that opens up new possibilities, roller-skating disco is among the first and most popular of the fads emerging from the disco craze now settling into the mainstream of pop culture. Although Infinity has lamentably gone up in smoke and Xenon's floor proved too small to be an effective arena, a number of New York rinks have adapted their existing environments to disco specifications, while eager entrepreneurs, hoping to cash in on the resurgence of the sport, are building new arenas boasting dazzling effects.

The disc jockey spinning a throbbing disco web over the rink has banished the organist's pedalled renditions of "Two for Tea" and "By the Sea," while fashionable trendsetters spotted in the rolling hordes have dispelled the hitherto prevalent attitude that roller rinks were a tacky, sleazy, and déclassé remnant of a bygone era. Disco dance teams such as Good Skates or the Village Wizards, who put on exhibitions at various functions, have supplanted the rough-and-tumble of the butch men and women who rammed their way around the rink in roller derbies.

Dressed in her skating togs—a purple spandex body suit, accented by a turquoise sash—pretty twenty-two-year-old Helena Lehane takes her hobby seriously enough to invest in an expensive pair of skates. She

rolls around the Village Skating Rink with a poise and cool that might inspire an inevitable disco hit, "Roller Skating Lady." "Rented skates are the pits," she notes, with the disdain of an equestrian comparing thoroughbreds to stable horses. Helena invests, like the cliquish groups hanging out on the tattered couches and chairs or whirling around the rink, a lot of time at the only rink in Manhattan, a tacky, flourescent-lit, small arena, with pastel murals and a mirrored ball. The less-than-aesthetic environment does not dampen the enthusiasm of the crowd, however, which is an eclectic cross-section of New Yorkers. Fleshy teenyboppers with pom-poms on their skates wheel around with their acned boyfriends in company with mustachioed Village clones whose red handkerchiefs trail behind them. Tiara-ed grandmas roll hand-in-hand with their agile grandchildren, moving dexterously to the music with appalling ease, oblivious to both the boys who slice through the crowd arm-in-arm and the green-haired punk in pink pants, set off by a faded black top which is ripped around the neck to expose a turquoise T-shirt. Most of the skaters move with an exhibitionistic hauteur that is comically broken when a collision or misjudgment sends them thumping to the floor.

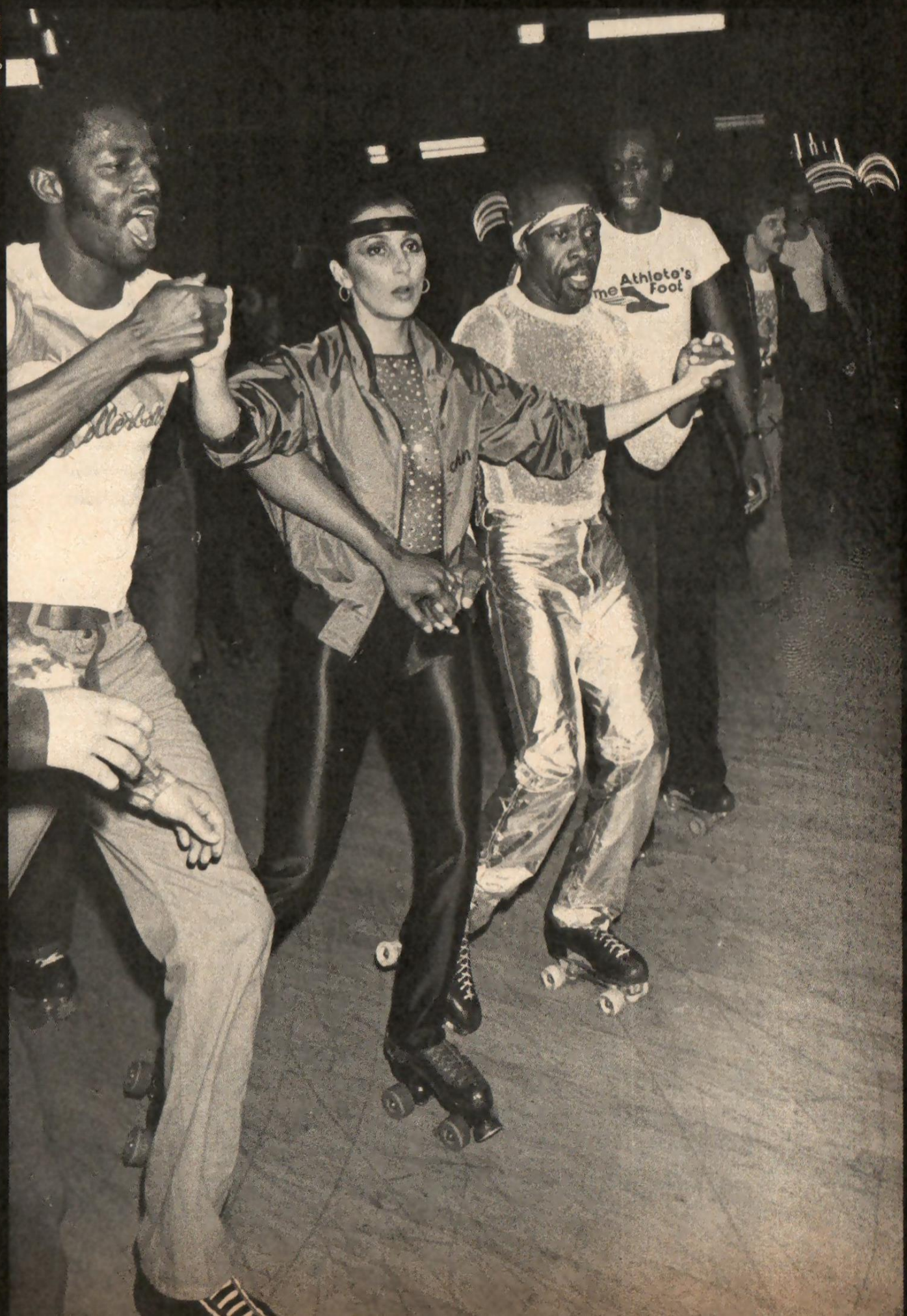
"It's kind of difficult to hurt yourself on the floor," says Mike, a sailor stationed at the Brooklyn naval yard, who claims that the most serious skaters are in New York. "In Utah, my home state where I worked in a rink, people wanted to go around in a circle and hopefully stay upright. In West Virginia, only the colored boys tried to dance to the music, but here everybody is grooving. I wrecked my kneecaps once trying to do a 360." A 360? "Yeah, it's where you turn a full circle in the air and continue skating. You can always tell the hardcore skater by the kneepads—they're out for blood."

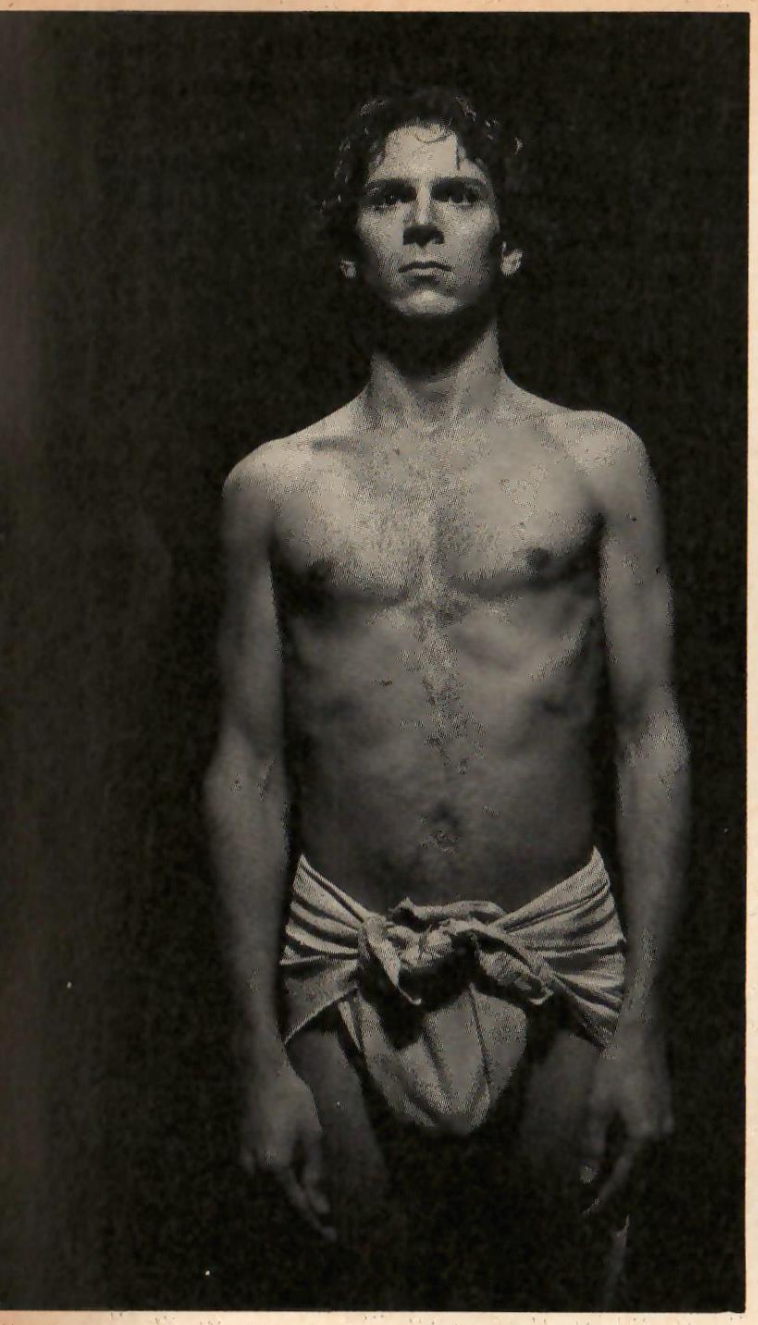
While most of these skaters are equally at home here as at a disco, some aficionados rarely go dancing. Like a strobe light, the rolling helps camouflage their less-than-lyrical footwork, while at the same time they can more easily move in sync with the music. Julio, the disc jockey at Village Skating, holds that spinning at a roller rink is similar to working a disco, except that an occasional slow tune is demanded. "I watch them to see when they are getting tired and then I'll slip on something like 'Love Don't Live Here Anymore,' by Rolls Royce. Sometimes they'll come rolling over to me and ask for a slow one, but they pick up on the tempo, so the faster the record the faster the skating."

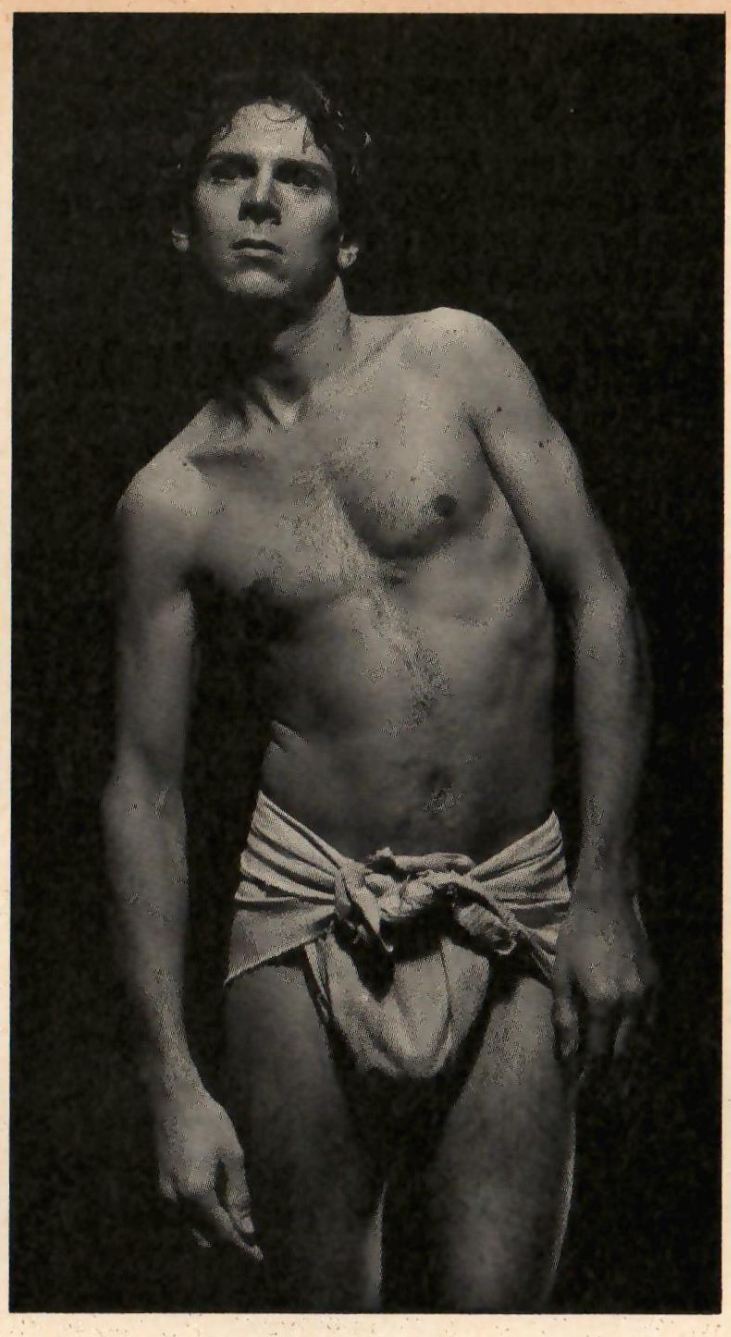
Julio further explains that the crowd has become older in the past couple of years. There was a wide spectrum of ages represented among the discophiles who jammed into the cavernous Empire Rink in Brooklyn recently for a Casablanca Records bash held in conjunction with the Billboard Disco Convention. The star of the evening was a glamorous but bored-looking Cher, who was poured into silk pants and a see-through silver top and escorted around the rink by two black bucks in comparably tight and complementary outfits. The desperate desire for the paparazzi to capture Cher in such a novel situation gave rise to the incongruous spectacle of hordes of photographers racing on foot around the rink to keep up with the whizzing songstress. While her disco hit "Take Me Home" blared from the massive sound system and banks of neon lights festively played on the handsome faces of the capacity throngs, Cher led the women guests through a "Ladies Only" number on the floor. Noting the large number of single males weaving their way amidst the women, the emcee tried to correct the situation by repeatedly shouting over the sound system, "Please, boys! Ladies only!" Male cries of "That's right, honey" gave credence that a new spirit of liberation and chic had come to the roller rink.

In conjunction with the Billboard Disco Convention, Casablanca Records threw a roller skating bash at the Empire Roller Rink in Brooklyn. In addition to the label's top acts, such as the Village People, Paul Jabara, and D.C. Larue, Cher was on hand and on wheels.

Waring Abbott







Photographer Jack Mitchell captures Philip Anglim in the process of assuming the stance that suggests the grotesque physical appearance of The Elephant Man, *the Bernard Pomerance drama based on the actual case history of John Merrick. Anglim's sensitive performance as the lionized 19th-century English romantic garnered "star-is-born" accolades when the ANTA production opened at St. Peter's Church Theatre before moving to the Booth Theatre on Broadway.*

To play a monster is, of course, nothing new in the theater or in films. But to play a monster of the kind Philip Anglim portrays in Bernard Pomerance's play *The Elephant Man* is to be in touch with an altogether novel dimension in matters of interpretation and stagecraft. The brilliant conceit of playwright Pomerance is to center an entire evening around a creature so revoltingly malformed, so hideously disease-ridden and wretchedly ugly that the only feasible way to represent the character was by casting an unusually handsome young actor in the pivotal role of John Merrick—the frighteningly misshapen Elephant Man.

In the play, which originally opened last January at Citicorp's tiny St. Peter's Church in New York and soon transferred to the Booth Theatre on Broadway, Philip Anglim's considerable job is to *suggest* Merrick's devastating affliction—to convey by inference and physical stance as well as vocal inflection the grotesque reality we are meant to imagine. Although the audience is shown photographic enlargements of the real John Merrick at the play's outset (and the shock is palpably felt throughout the theater), Anglim, through a carefully worked-out, contorted stoop and a voice which utters words in a labored yet clearly articulated way, contrives to bridge seamlessly the spectacle of the awesome photographs. He maintains the illusion of physical deformity while remaining viably good-looking, and grants the public the relief of being in the presence of a human being whose inner life is, after all and in fact, being explored.

The Elephant Man, superbly directed by Jack Hofsiss and meticulously produced by Richmond Crinkley, is based on an actual case history which Philip Anglim has gone to pains to study and learn more about. During a recent interview, the tall, dark-haired, twenty-six-year-old actor, whose first major New York theater exposure this is, talked eloquently about the actual John Merrick and how he came to play him.

"John Merrick was born around 1863 and he died when he was twenty-six or twenty-seven," he began. "At around the age of three, he began to show signs of suffering from a disease which, at that time, had not been diagnosed but is now called neurofibramatosis, which is a progressively degenerating disease of the skin, bone, and nerve tissue. Merrick had enormous bony growths emerging from an already oversized head, and his jaw was so contorted that half his mouth was wrenched inside out. Merrick could weep, but he couldn't smile. His right arm was massive and shapeless, and his entire skin was covered with cauliflower-like eruptions that reeked because they were fungus-ridden.

"Very little is known about Merrick prior to his confinement in London Hospital, but he wrote about his life, and some of what he wrote is obviously rooted in fantasy. For example, to explain his deformity, he made up the story that his mother was knocked down by an elephant in a circus during the time she was pregnant with him. At any rate, when he was three years old, he was sold into a workhouse in Leicester, and he lived there until well into his teens. Then he was sold to a third-rate freak-show owner who thought he could turn a pretty penny on him. This owner started to tour him and, as John got older, his deformity got worse and worse, to the point where he became so grotesque that instead of amusing people, he created a kind of mob hysteria. People looking at him would try to destroy him—rip him apart.

"So the police stopped granting permits for him to be exhibited, and John's owner, no longer able to profit from him, put a few coins in his pocket and put him on a train to London. When he got there, a frightened mob gathered around him at Liverpool Station, and the police whisked him away. In one of his pockets they found a card which read: 'Frederick Treves, Lecturer in Anatomy, London Hospital.' As it happened, two years

PHILIP ANGLIM: **THE ELEPHANT MAN GIRDS HIS LOINS**

by John Gruen

Susan Cook

Susan Cook

In The Elephant Man, *Kevin Conway superbly plays Dr. Frederick Treves, the surgeon general who champions John Merrick when his misshapen and hideous form is threatened by an outraged public. Treves enlists the sympathetic aid of the actress Mrs. Kendal (at right, stunningly created by Carole Shelley) in order to bring some semblance of normal human contact for Merrick.*

earlier, Treves, who is played by Kevin Conway in the play, had once examined him in London just to study him, and then returned him to his owner. Well, for two years Merrick had carried this card around with him, and when the police found it, they contacted Treves, and Merrick was brought to London Hospital.

"The administrator, a very shrewd man, wrote a letter to the *London Times*, describing the plight of John Merrick. Because people couldn't see him, it aroused such pity that hundreds of thousands of pounds were sent to London Hospital—so much so that he was endowed for life and, upon Merrick's death, an enormous amount of money was left over for the hospital itself. Well, Merrick lived at London Hospital for four years, and during the course of those years, he became lionized by Victorian society. The highest in the land came to visit him—Princess Alexandra and countless others. They gave him exquisite gifts and showered him with attention. In the meantime, his disease was getting worse. His heart was getting weaker, his head was getting bigger and heavier, and his limbs were getting more unwieldy. While in the hospital, he built a model of a cathedral he called St. Philip's, and I've seen pictures of it. It is extraordinary—the detail, the gargoyles, the flying buttresses! It's an unbelievable example of High Gothic architecture, and he made it with just one hand!

"Four years later he died. He was found one afternoon stretched-out on his bed—a position he was not supposed to be in. Merrick had to sleep sitting-up with his head on his knees, because the weight of his head, if in a normal lying position, would cut off his windpipe and kill him. But that's how they found him. There was much discussion as to whether it was suicide, whether he just slipped in his sleep, or whether it was his last attempt to sleep like normal people. The most extraordinary thing about John Merrick was that through the entire arc of his life he exhibited nothing but a kind of vital, innocent, naïve lust for life—a love for all people, without bitterness, without rancor, without self-pity. He was not a misanthrope. There was nothing withdrawn or wild about him. He had great nobility and dignity and, of course, it's very important that he's played that way."

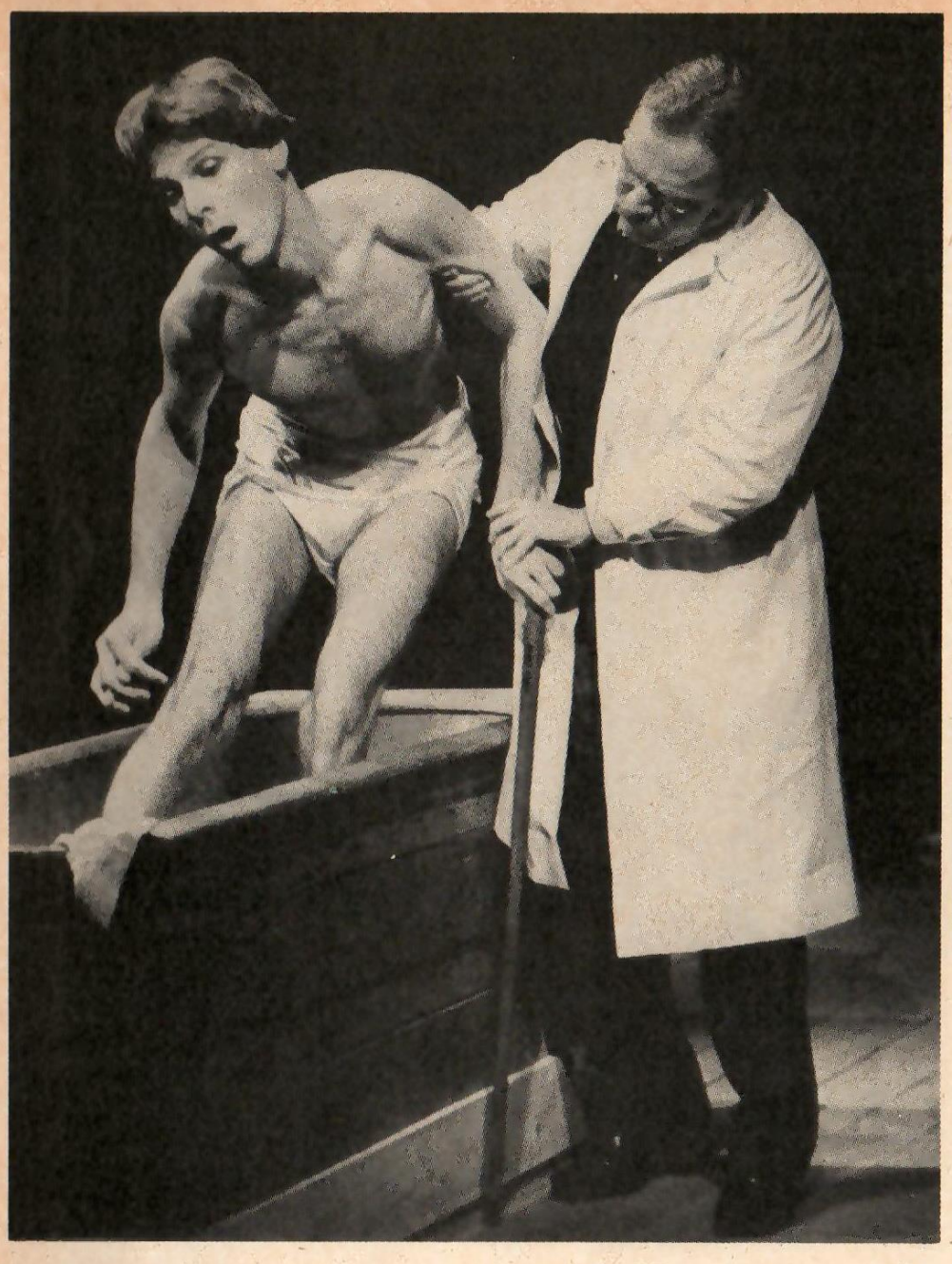
Philip Anglim, an actor of obvious intelligence and sensitivity, so inhabits the role of John Merrick that one is moved not only by Merrick's plight, but by the strength of his spirit and by the genuine honesty and beauty of his outlook on life. The challenge of the role lies not so much in giving Merrick a sense of physicality—a feat in itself—but in disclosing the truth of the character's whole psychological being. As Anglim puts it, the role demands the training of a dancer, the voice of an opera singer, and the imagination of an extraordinary painter or of a Fellini.

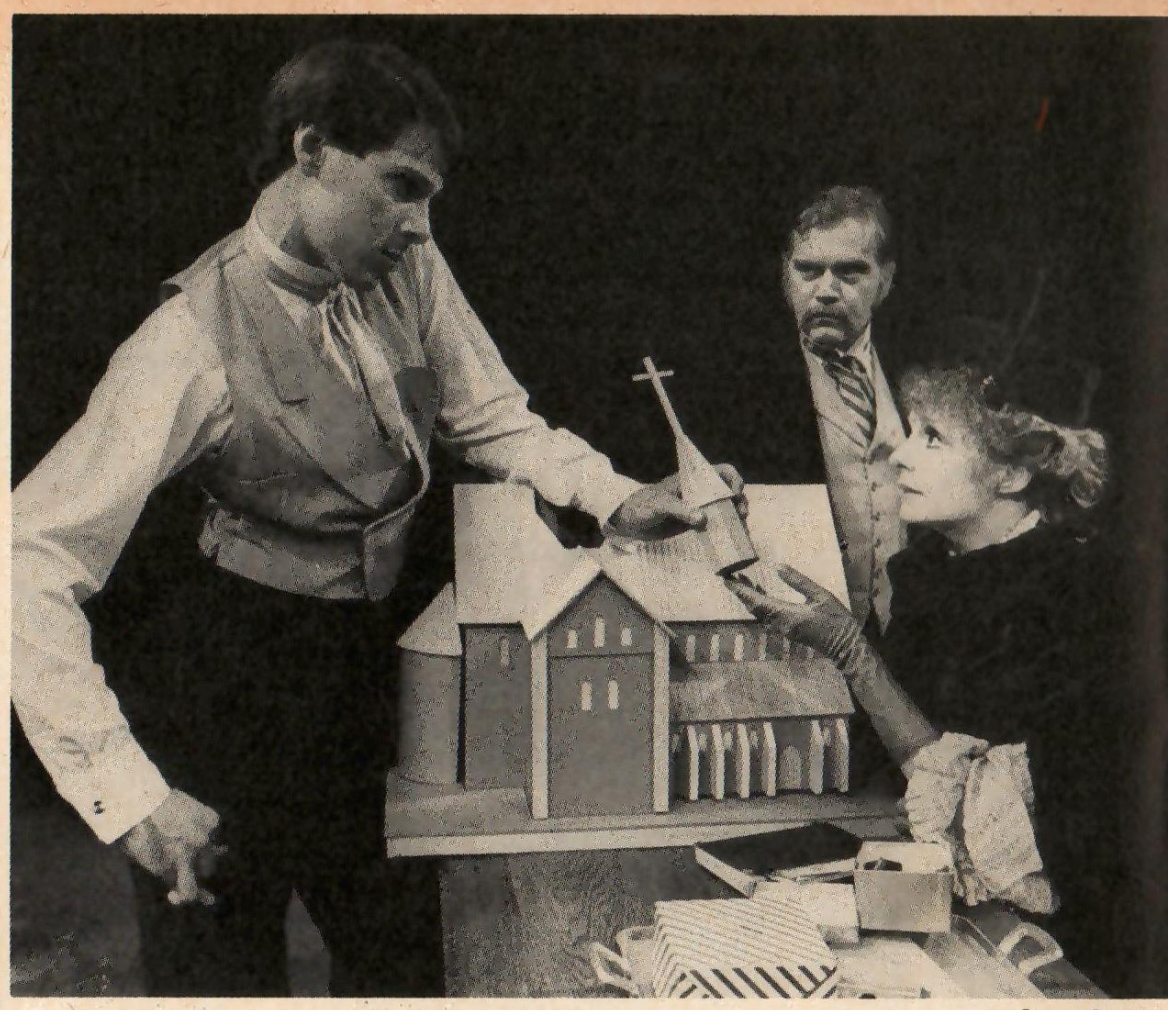
"When I landed the part of Merrick, the question in my mind was whether I was truly equipped to handle it," he admits. "I mean, it's hard enough when you have to do a part where you have to talk and walk normally. I was literally stumbling along trying to find a physical life, a vocal life, and desperately hoping that an inner life would somehow materialize. And the other actors were watching this bizarre thing I was going through . . . you know, hunched over and babbling like an idiot. They watched me with a sort of amused skepticism. I dared not ask anybody what they thought. I had tremendous respect for Kevin Conway and Carole Shelley, who plays Mrs. Kendal, Merrick's actress friend, and their kindness was expressed in their silence as I struggled to find my interpretation. It's the nicest thing they could have done for me.

"At one point, I got too emotionally involved with the character. In the scene where I first meet Carole Shelley—Mrs. Kendal—I was suddenly overcome by this monster saying, 'If I had been Romeo! . . .' I just broke down and wept. And that, of course, was getting too involved. So, the secret to playing that part is that it must be played in a way that is totally *unsentimental* —without a shred of self-pity. As soon as you start asking for pity, you're finished."

Although Philip Anglim landed the role of John Merrick through an audition, he had the

Susan Cook





Susan Cook

Physically and emotionally supported by the kindly ministrations of Treves and Mrs. Kendal, Merrick reciprocates with a touching capacity for nobility and dignity, expressed in his soaring model of St. Philip's Cathedral.

advantage of having worked with producer Richmond Crinkley several years earlier when he appeared in a play in New York entitled *You're Gonna Be Alright, Jamie-Boy.* As it turned out, Anglim had also seen the original production of *The Elephant Man* while on vacation in London. "But David Schofield, who played John Merrick in London, was very different physically, and while his performance was stunning, there were things I wanted to do with it that he didn't do. At any rate, I got the part and Bernard Pomerance, the author, wasn't around. He didn't arrive until opening night, and then took off again for England. Bernard, like his plays, is a complex and difficult man. He's an American who comes from New York, but has lived in London for seven or eight years, and all his plays have been done over there. He's a very private person and I think he saw in this human document a story upon which he could build a marvelous play. He is very concerned with what society does to people, and one of the greatest virtues of *The Elephant Man* is that it's not obvious. It never says any one thing, but works on different levels."

As a relatively unknown actor, Anglim has gone through the uncertainties and struggles of any aspiring young artist in search of a career in the theater. In some ways, his background differs from that of other actors in that his childhood was an unusually happy one and that he is the product of Yale University, factors that have enabled him to pursue his career with a certain sense of emotional stability and intellectual security. During his junior year at Yale, he also had the good fortune to meet someone who he claims changed his life—Eva Le Gallienne. "Miss Le Gallienne lived in Weston, Connecticut, and the whole time I was in New Haven, I would get on my motorcycle and drive down to her place. I spent a lot of time with her. I don't know if one ever learns anything specific from other artists—I think it's more a process of osmosis—but she was so good to me. I mean, she was absolutely ruthless—she was cold-bloodedly honest with me. She came to see me in *Peer Gynt* and I would do bits of Shakespeare for her, and her comments were often devastating. I remember her saying that eighty-five percent of all actors shouldn't be actors, and I never dared ask her to which percentage I belonged."

During his senior year at Yale in 1974, Philip Anglim applied to three drama schools: Juilliard, the Central, and RADA—the latter two in London. Auditions were held in New York, and Anglim was rejected by all three schools. He was devastated. To compound his misery, he had lost an opportunity of being directed by Eva Le Gallienne in Shakespeare's *Richard II.* So, upon graduating from Yale, he returned to his home, San Francisco, hoping to find work at the American Conservatory Theater. But no jobs were available. Crushed, but unwilling to face defeat, he resolved to tackle New York.

"I came to New York and went to study with Wynn Handman, the director of the American Place Theatre. I worked with him for nine months, and he was an excellent influence on me, because at the time I didn't have a certain kind of American technique—I didn't have that organic way of working. I always worked from the outside in, and Wynn teaches you to work from the inside out."

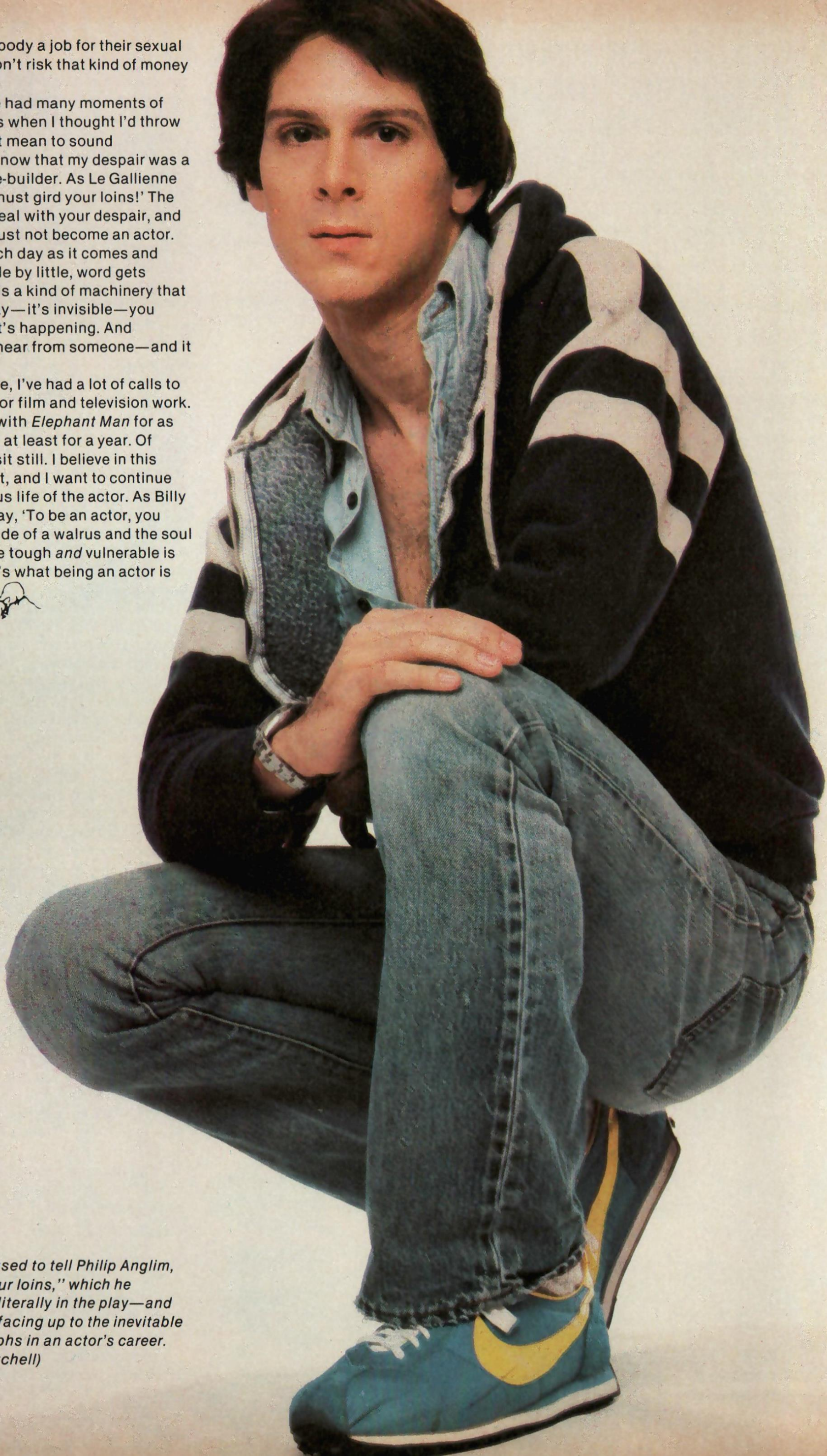
During this period, Anglim supported himself by waiting on tables and taking on a typing job. Then, he met the late Jay Wolf, a casting director, who asked him to read for a part in the WNET-TV series "The Adam's Chronicles." The audition won him the part of Charles Adams, and it was his first major exposure on national television. Anglim's career in the theater slowly began to blossom. In addition to appearing in David Freeman's *You're Gonna Be Alright, Jamie-Boy*, he was cast in Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*, presented by the American Place Theatre. At the Cincinnati Playhouse, he performed in *What the Butler Saw* and *The Contrast*, and at the Berkshire Theatre Festival, he appeared in *The Lion in Winter.* He guest starred on TV's "MacMillan and Wife" and appeared in the films *The All-American Boy* with Jon Voight and *Mohammed, Messenger of God.* Just prior to his appearance in *The Elephant Man*, Anglim completed a thirty-segment television series for MCPB in the soon-to-be-released "Tomorrow's Families."

"You know, when you first come to New York, you feel that every door is closed, and you keep pushing and pushing," he says. "Well, I was never any good at pushing. But what does begin to happen is that you become noticed by your peers. And it's your peers that find you work. As for things like the so-called casting couch, that's a myth. The industry is too expensive, the stakes are too high, and the money being gambled is too

much to give somebody a job for their sexual prowess. People don't risk that kind of money for a good lay!

"Believe me, I've had many moments of despair—moments when I thought I'd throw in the towel. I don't mean to sound patronizing, but I know that my despair was a very strong muscle-builder. As Le Gallienne used to say, 'You must gird your loins!' The fact is, you must deal with your despair, and if you can't, you must not become an actor. You must meet each day as it comes and address it. And little by little, word gets around, and there is a kind of machinery that starts to grind away—it's invisible—you don't really know it's happening. And suddenly you will hear from someone—and it will happen!

"As for the future, I've had a lot of calls to come in and read for film and television work. But I want to stay with *Elephant Man* for as long as it runs—or at least for a year. Of course, one can't sit still. I believe in this occupation-by-drift, and I want to continue living the hazardous life of the actor. As Billy Redfield used to say, 'To be an actor, you have to have the hide of a walrus and the soul of a fairy.' So, to be tough *and* vulnerable is very hard, but that's what being an actor is finally all about!"



Eva Le Gallienne used to tell Philip Anglim, "You must gird your loins," which he continues to do—literally in the play—and metaphorically in facing up to the inevitable defeats and triumphs in an actor's career. (Photo by Jack Mitchell)

CINEMATIC THEATER: **"THE UMBRELLAS OF CHERBOURG" ON STAGE**

by Nathan Fain photos by Martha Swope

Mike Nichols saw it with Candice Bergen. They were weeping at the last, Nichols exclaiming his vow to produce the show on Broadway. "It's the best stage musical I've ever seen," he said.

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg drew every major producer, director, lyricist, and composer to the cabaret coziness of Martinson Hall from its opening January 31 to closing night March 4. Response to Andrei Serban's setting of the 1964 Jacques Demy-Michel Legrand film was uncommonly positive from audiences and critics, a tough crowd who found themselves reduced to bleary-eyed admiration over a simple—almost transparent—love story that floats on a rivulet of music under continual showers.

This son of *A Chorus Line*, mounted with the record profits of Joseph Papp's most financially winning offspring from his twenty-five years at the head of the Public Theater on Lafayette Street, may (or may not) be the wavelet of the future. The innovations Papp brought to a formula-encrusted form with *A Chorus Line* and *For Colored Girls . . .* (both "confessional" shows with minimal sets and costumes) appear dated against the idea behind this new model from the research labs of America's "single most important theatrical institution" (Richard Eder, *The New York Times*).

The idea is revolutionary: drop the book. The "bookless musical" operates like an opera, using recitative instead of spoken lines to tie the show into one seamless and fluid whole. No big show-stopping "production" numbers, no star turns, no somersaulting waiters at the Harmonia Gardens. Instead, a new intimacy that denies extravagance and invites involvement. Small is better in the year when the Rockettes of Radio City are about to disappear and the big, splashy spectacle has virtually perished. Or else it has moved to Hollywood, where they can afford spectacles and have begun, as with Universal Pictures' *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, to produce them on Broadway for eventual capture in celluloid.

Traditional avenues of progress for the musical thus reversed, the fashion on the Rialto has come to taking movies as a starting point for musicals. Witness *King of Hearts* from Philippe de Broca's cult film of the same title, and *Sarava* from the Brazilian *Doña Flor and Her Two Husbands.* David Merrick soon will do *42nd Street* with Gower Champion directing this show based on the 1933 Warner Bros. musical film. Film-to-stage graftings of the past include *Sweet Charity* (from Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria*), taken from a movie that later became yet another movie, as did *The Wiz* (from *The Wizard of Oz*), *Chicago* (from *Roxie Hart*), *The Happy Time*, and *Gigi.*

"It is always raining in Cherbourg," said Michel Legrand, with Maurice Jarre, France's leading composer of music for movies. Taking his meteorological observation to heart, director Jacques Demy conceived of a film musical of constant song against a rainswept background in the small Normandy port where an umbrella shop presumably would do—but doesn't—great business. Catherine Deneuve was cast as a restless child of the age who tries to escape her mother's *boutique des parapluies* by the time-honored method of falling in love with and becoming pregnant by the local Lothario, played in the film by Nino Castelnuovo. But the boy is drafted to Algeria, and before he returns with wound and pension, his Genevieve has been wed to a businessman her mother's age. They meet by accident at his Esso gas station one day, she with daughter born of their romance. The soft rain of Cherbourg and the sweet music of Legrand, not to mention the hard candy pastels of Bernard Evein's art direction in fluorescent Eastmancolor, pushed *Umbrellas* beyond the merely sentimental into outright monsoons of emotion. Legrand won an Academy Award nomination for the song "I Will Wait for You," one of its three mentions for an Oscar that year (1965), including best foreign film. *Umbrellas* was regarded as a breakthrough in film style; a tide of imitators surely would follow, but aside from Demy's

Dean Pitchford plays the mechanic to Joe Palmieri's boss in The Umbrellas of Cherbourg, *the recent Andrei Serban staging at the Public Theatre that lent new fluidity to dramatic method by using film techniques borrowed from the 1964 French movie, directed by Jacques Demy.*

1967 *Les Demoiselles de Rochefort* (with Deneuve and her late sister, Françoise Dorleac), nobody extended the ultimate compliment.

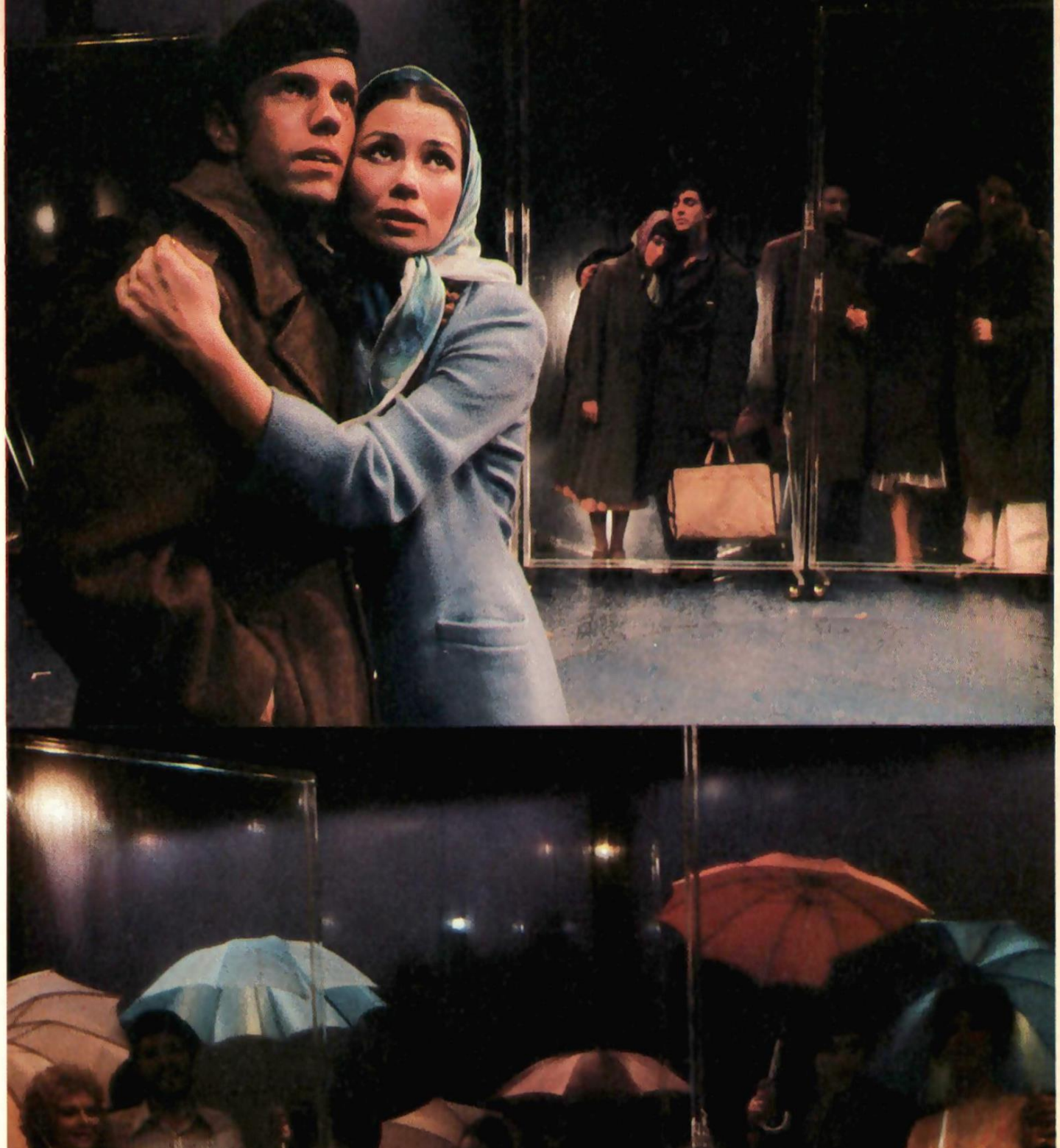
A stage version of the movie had been knocking around New York for twelve years when Craig Zadan, Papp's head of Special Projects at the Public, staged a private reading of it on January 30, 1978, a year before the recent premiere. Fresh from his successes for Papp at the Vivian Beaumont Theater (*The Cherry Orchard* and *Agamemnon*), the Rumanian-born director Andrei Serban saw Zadan's reading and was struck by the Legrand score and by the possibility of handing the world a surprise by re-creating film rhythms on a stage.

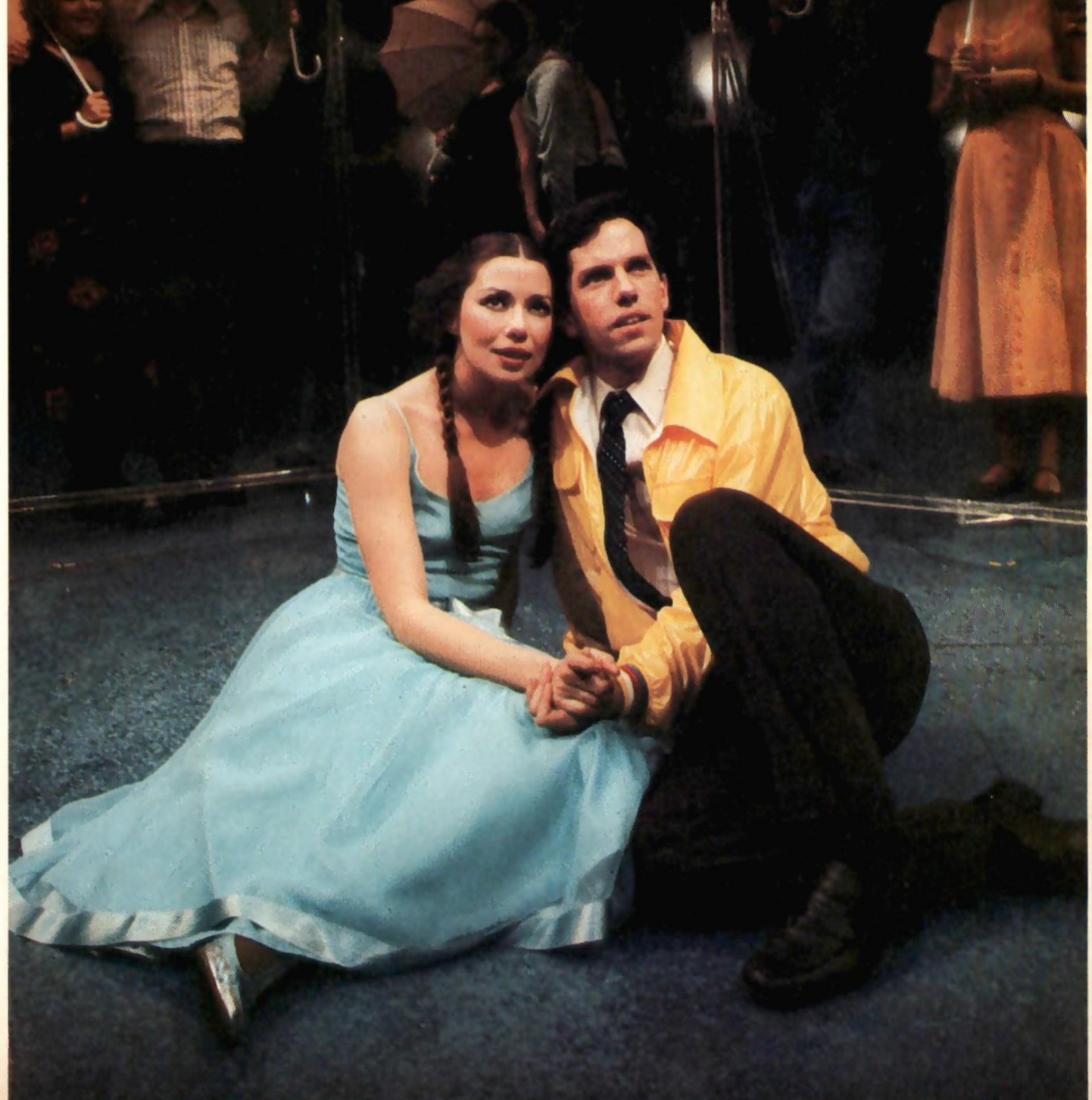
"We were intrigued by the idea of doing a musical without a book," Zadan said. "After the workshop, we screened the film—before that we were going on memory—and we were struck by how cloying and garish it was. At first we thought the only way around that problem was to go black and white with almost no color in the lighting gels, to make it more a silhouette, a little flat to balance the sweetness of the music. But we didn't like that."

Instead, Zadan cast the show last November while Serban was busy directing *The Master and Marg ırita*. "It was terribly hard to cast," Zadan said, "because we had to find actors who could sing, but not in the standard Broadway sense, not *big*. This is not a show for Ethel Merman. We had some people with these huge, booming voices, and we had to pull them way, way down to make the recitative passages work."

This sort of trust and close working sense is rare in theater and rarer still for Serban, who at thirty-five has an international reputation not only as a genius at staging heavy, ferocious classics, but doing them with a fierce discipline that leaves little room for lightness. His adaptations of *Medea*, *Elektra*, and *The Trojan Women* are violent and often idiosyncratic; the Lincoln Center *Agamemnon* was sung, shouted, and grunted in ancient Greek to music by Elizabeth Swados that sounded like Whitman's "barbaric yawp." He had two giant steel risers built to seat part of his audience rear stage, giving the half-circle Beaumont an arena form, and then mounted the risers on casters so that stagehands could move them like saloon doors as his Greek chorus spilled toward spectators with the rage of burning gasoline. This device was the precursor to the ingenious answer Serban invented for *Umbrellas*; if he couldn't move the audience in a cabaret on casters, he would put the show on casters and a turntable.

Serban conferred with set designer





"In Cherbourg, it is always raining," said Michel Legrand, who wrote the nonstop score for the film musical adapted to the stage with Dean Pitchford and Stefanianne Christopherson (right, above and below) in parts originally played by Nino Castelnuovo and Catherine Deneuve.

A strand of diamonds is the catalyst that draws Laurence Guittard (standing) into a pragmatic relationship with Stefanianne Christopherson in this scene also featuring Judith Roberts (as the mother) and Marc Jordan.

Michael Yeargan and a crew of fourteen carpenters. They built a series of twelve Plexiglas panels braced on caster-mounted grids and sprayed with a variety of shellac to give them a rain-streaked shimmer. Casters went under everything to give a fluid ease to scene changes, and clear plastic umbrellas served a semaphoric symbolism when held by supporting players against these panels that became the rooms of a house, the side of buildings, and at times simply abstract surfaces whooshing in menace against lovers trapped by their own youth. Behind all this, Serban draped a giant back-lighted photomural of Second Empire boulevards, a Cherbourg of one's imagining that glistens forever with a sad mist.

"It isn't at all like any of the shows Papp has ever done," Zadan said. "Sometimes he does something out of a social conscience, but in this case he genuinely loves it. And with Andrei it's the same affection. He liked it immediately when he saw the reading."

For himself, Serban said he has often felt the presence of an invisible camera behind him. He faced the challenge of moving intact the flow of Demy's camera (Jean Rabier actually photographed the film) to the stage. There was the added task of "taking a simple emotional line of a story and reaching the audience by its true validity," instead of, presumably, by drenching them in its easily frothed suds.

"The difficulty," Serban said, "was in matching the tempo of the film, which is mostly short scenes. The theater follows another tempo, and in the musical theater there are major scenes that stop that flow. Yet the theater has its own rules. We didn't want to 'improve' on the music, we treated it like an opera. One takes it as it is, like *La Bohème*, with no changes. Before, the plays I have worked with I have always adapted. Here we tried to make something that is not theater but to re-create film on the stage, with the panels like editing scissors. To have big numbers would have ruined it."

Serban made his choreography into a ceaseless flux of citizens who are the townspeople at times and at other, harsher moments take on dreamlike roles that comment on the lovers' sadness. This grating element Serban found necessary to relieve Legrand's music of its almost total airiness, what Serban calls "a vigorous manifestation of the opposite."

"I am interested in contradictions," he said, adding that he intended "something unexpected" in staging *Umbrellas.* "I like to keep surprising the audience, but at the end, what we did is not a betrayal [of the film]. It

Carnival revelry forms a grotesque background for the play's ill-starred lovers in Andrei Serban's inventive staging.

A bittersweet Christmas comes to a rain-soaked Cherbourg for Dean Pitchford and Maureen Silliman, who pair up after Stefanianne Cristopherson, wearing white and an ample Empire waistline (below), hastily weds Laurence Guittard.

would have been absurd to have changed it."

A certain irony emerges against the history of Serban's convulsive, sometimes scatological productions. *Umbrellas* contains so slight a plot as to be not even there; its music weighs as much as a cobweb in a spring shower. His roller-bearing stage devices seem to be the real show and to offer interesting possibilities for future productions written, if not expressly for the camera, at least in its realm, with lighting effects that suggest fades and crosscuts, close-ups and pans—and Ian Calderon's lighting of *Umbrellas* succeeds well.

The logical next step would be for Serban to direct a film, but "I've had no offers, although I'm open to them," he admitted. "I feel like a frustrated film director, but in a way it is more interesting to do this, to take the film to the stage." Others, notably Harold Prince, would certainly agree, given the same sense of film pacing Prince brought to his staging of *Cabaret*, in its time (1966) considered a breakthrough of the same sort. And his staging of the Webber-Rice "rock opera" *Evita*, the current hit of London due here in the fall, contains almost no dialogue that is spoken. His new Stephen Sondheim show *Sweeney Todd* likewise eliminates virtually all spoken lines in favor of a long sinuous line of melody.

At the time he spoke, Serban was awaiting word from Nichols whether the show would "move"—that is, to Broadway. "We know that he likes it very much, but the world of the emotions is one thing and the world of money is something else again, is it not? I have been taking time off to myself now, and I have no idea what my next project will be. Because, frankly, I am very tired after this. We worked very hard."

It paid off, critically at least. *The New York Times* found it "captivating," the *Post* "genuinely original," and the *New Yorker* saluted "Mr. Serban's astonishing theatrical inventiveness." As usual, the Sunday *Times* critic Walter Kerr put his finger right on it: "The staging is silken, a thing of gracefully elided movement, omnipresent shadows, rainbow bursts of mist-drenched hues . . . endlessly fluid, engagingly pretty. The evening is determined to beguile."

Whether *Umbrellas* unfurls elsewhere or dies aborning, Zadan says its message is alive in the imaginations of such as Michael (*A Chorus Line*) Bennett, who saw it in its last week at the Public. "Everybody's talking about the show," he said, " whether they liked it for one reason or another. The originality of it has set people thinking."

What they think ranges from a reflexive nausea to stupefied admiration, sweetness not being everybody's favorite taste. It is clear that *Umbrellas* has cast a large shadow in a small space.

JAMES MASON: **ODD MAN IN**

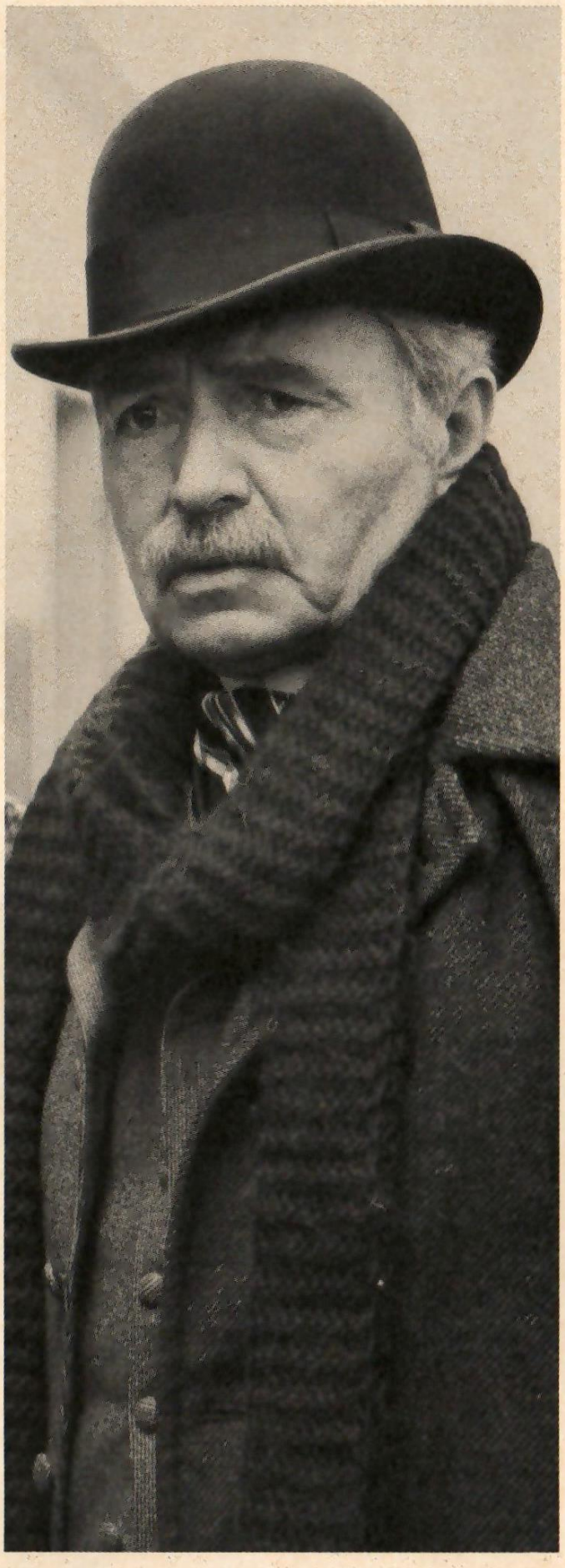
by Brant Mewborn

James Mason is wearing a Muhammed Ali wristwatch that tells more than time. Emblazoned with *I Am the Greatest*, the flashy pop trinket is glaringly incongruous with the distinguished, sixty-nine-year-old English actor's wool-and-corduroy attire. He's simply a bit eccentric, one immediately thinks, as Mason settles in for this interview at his Regency Hotel suite in New York, crossing his legs and dangling a bedroom slipper from his suspended foot. Once the conversation is rolling along, however, one can see the funky timepiece as a fitting token of the maverick sense of humor and intelligence that has characterized—and very often complicated—James Mason's forty-eight-year-long career as an actor—the same qualities that have made him a show-biz survivor with style.

First and last, there is the immutable fact and force of that unmistakable Voice. Close-up, he may look like a graying man of letters, a graying man of medicine, a graying man of God, a graying man of the theater—a graying man. But, without doubt, he sounds like James Mason the movie star. The Voice. A multimedia absolute. Always full of vocally raised eyebrows and sly sarcasm, no matter how innocent or straightforward the words. A mix of menace and majesty. Sheer style: emphasis for the sake of emphasis. The substance of the statements are almost rendered irrelevant. But this is an interview with the *keeper* of that Voice, and up for discussion is his life in the art and commerce of acting.

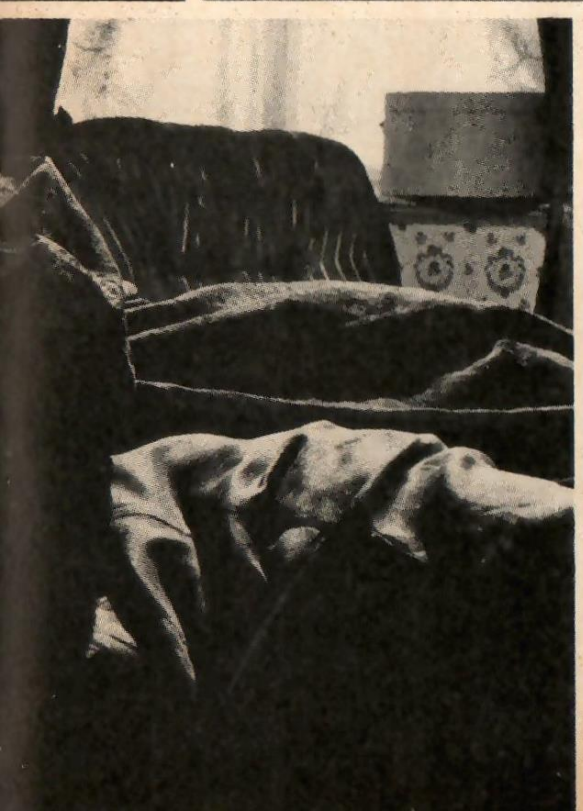
Films, of course, are what James Mason is all about. More than 100 feature films offer testimony. There are also television claims on Mason; he even admits to pioneering pre-War II television plays. But although the artistic differences between the little screen and the big one are disappearing, even in Mason's opinion, he says that doing TV still carries a certain amount of stigma for a "quote, movie star, unquote." The Theater, however, will always be The Theater. That's where Mason got his start, occasionally visited throughout his career, and even now, some thirty-two years after the Broadway debut of James and Pamela Mason (his first conjugal co-star) in the Biblical disaster *Bathsheba*, Mason and Clarissa Kaye (his second conjugal co-star) bring their united belief to Broadway in *Faith Healer*, a new play about a preacher and his miracles in the backwoods of England. Why this new faith in Broadway?

"Because I'm married to a very good actress who comes from Sydney, Australia,



As Dr. Watson in the latest Sherlock Holmes contrivance, Murder by Decree, *James Mason nearly steals the film with some masterful jabs at a stubborn pea in a hilarious dining scene. With more than 100 film credits to his forty-eight-year-old career, James Mason always brings style even to such film follies as last year's Nazi nonsense,* The Boys from Brazil *(above center).*

Judy Garland relaxes with James Mason on the set of A Star Is Born *(1954), the film that won him an Oscar nomination for his sensitive portrayal of the dissipated movie actor whose star falls as that of his wife (Garland) rises.*



In one of his more famous roles, as Humbert Humbert in Lolita *(1962), Mason endured the unwanted attentions of Shelley Winters in order to get to Sue Lyon, her beautiful nymphet daughter.*

I'd often thought how nice it would be for us to do a play together," Mason answers sweetly, then reconsiders not so sweetly. "Well, forget about her. First of all, I simply thought how nice it would be to do a play again, because I observed that in England particularly, the theater was in much healthier condition than the movies. So I started looking in England, but we didn't quite put one together there. Then last year when I was traveling around this country plugging *The Boys from Brazil*, I met Audrey Wood, the literary agent, who gave me this play to read. Clarissa and I both thought it was not only a play that had to be done, but one that preferably had to be done by us. Anyhow, I prefer doing it here because there's always something very exciting about playing *on Broadway*. If you are connected with a success in New York, or the United States for that matter, it's really an emotional explosion."

There was a time, however, when James Neville Mason had not experienced the thrill of theatrical fireworks. The son of a prosperous wool merchant in Huddersfield, Yorkshire, England, he had earned his Master of Arts degree in architecture at Cambridge when, after a few bit parts in amateur theater, he was seized by the revelation that he was "more likely to win some sort of applause for myself as an actor. I had the greatest respect for myself as an architect, don't get me wrong. But at the time—we're going back to 1931—it was the Depression still. People were not building things, and I had no friendly uncle architects ."

Mason pursued his new profession by racking up experience "in the provinces" and answering the advertisements in *The Stage* trade magazine. "Unfortunately, most of the ads referred to concert parties and vaudeville work. They'd say, 'Juv needed concert parties May to September. Must have own tux and tap shoes.' Which was definitely not for me!" Musicals hardly fit the prescribed bill of fare for a serious young thespian like Mason, who soon found work with the Croydon Repertory Company, Dublin's Gate Theatre, and the prestigious Old Vic before he was seduced into the movies in 1935 as the early lead in *Late Extra*. But there was an instance in the early 1960s when Mason nearly unleashed his virginal musical talents upon an unsuspecting world.

"I was very impressed with the fact that Rex Harrison had had a terrific shot in the arm by his success in *My Fair Lady*. And I thought, 'Golly! Just think what that would do for me at the moment.' So shortly after that—*here's an anecdote coming up*—I

happened to find myself in New York. . . ." By way of synopsis, Mason's impromptu rendition of "I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts" at a Cliff Robertson and Dina Merrill dinner party was witnessed by an agent who soon had Mason being considered for the lead in a new musical comedy.

Meanwhile, Stanley Kubrick offered Mason the Humbert Humbert role in the film version of Nabokov's controversial *Lolita* (1962), and he almost passed up one of the best parts of his career for a musical destined to flop. "This is the curious thing, from a biographical point of view"—Mason winks with his voice—"I turned Kubrick down and I couldn't believe it. Fortunately, as so often happens in my life when I make a prompt and idiotic decision like that, there's somebody who will just *jog* me and say, 'Come on, wake up!' I can't remember who told me to wake up on that occasion, but they did. And before anyone was cast, I made a turnabout and told Stanley I'd be only too happy to play

Martha Swope

James Mason and his wife, Australian actress Clarissa Kaye, opened in April on Broadway in Brian Friel's new play, The Faith Healer.

Humbert. And this reminds me, more recently I originally turned down *Murder by Decree*, but my daughter and my wife said, 'Come on, pull yourself together.' I was being *fussy* because I thought that it was going to be too bloody and that the story was too complicated."

Actually, Mason was all too accurate in his original evaluation of this latest Sherlock Holmes contrivance. *Murder by Decree* is an expensive, overwrought indulgence in thriller camp and is a great deal bloodier and more ponderous than it is clever. But Mason emerges comically triumphant as a prissy, easily puzzled and perturbed Dr. Watson whose hilarious dining misadventure with a reluctant pea is the movie's most entertaining moment. This personal victory within an otherwise artistic failure is typical of Mason's overall movie career. For despite his oft-stated belief in the aesthetic potential of the filmic medium, Mason readily admits that through the combined misfortune of his exercising poor artistic judgment and kowtowing to financial necessity, he appeared in only a handful of good films among his more than one hundred credits. Even the few projects in which he personally had some control (often with his first wife, writer-actress Pamela Mason) were usually artistic or financial failures, or both. Through the years, Mason has learned well that the art of survival requires lessons in the art of compromise, and in the light of his steady employment, he seems to have mastered them graciously and successfully. This has not always been the case, however.

Since Mason is one of those rare actors who has a way with the written word as well as the spoken, he has often contributed his wry, slightly jaundiced, and self-deprecating opinions on subjects as diverse as theater and cats to a variety of newspapers and magazines. Unfortunately, he usually showed an unhealthy knack for writing ironic articles that were easy to misinterpret and even more difficult to explain. At the height of his matinee-idol popularity during the mid-1940s, for example, a lighthearted essay he wrote on the lack of glamour in filmmaking in general was widely misconstrued as a specific slam against the English film industry, where his outspoken demands for higher artistic competence had already branded him a troublemaker. His subsequent departure to the States for more career opportunities also offended his English fans, who felt he had sold out to Hollywood. These were probably the same fans who eagerly believed every word of his essay, "Yes, I Beat My Wife," a facetious reply to the rumors about his real-life sadism, which had been inspired by his popular screen roles as a brutal lover.

Mason's propensity for attracting bad publicity took an uglier turn in Hollywood, where he and his wife, Pamela, were nearly ostracized by the entire movie colony because they had joked about the various social cliques in a sensationalized magazine interview. Matters worsened when the gossip mills ground out rumors to the effect that an extended live-in visit by Pamela's former husband, Roy Kellino, constituted a *ménage à trois*, and that their precocious six-year-old daughter, Portland, frequented nightclubs, sported mink coats, and had her own psychiatrist. When a columnist forecast the couple's split, Mason finally exploded and sued for slander. (Several years later, in 1964, they actually did go through a messy divorce.) This dramatic reaction to the kind of matter most Tinsel Town citizens considered harmlessly routine cinched his Hollywood alienation. Mason also managed to secure the general antipathy of the press by making a point of calling them "illiterate boors with unretentive memories"—in print.

In view of these bitter skirmishes with the press in the past, Mason is a surprisingly congenial interviewee. He has obviously profited from his past experiences. Today he speaks like a gentleman long acquainted with the subtle diplomacy of polite repartee and shrewdly keeps the conversation under the professional heading of "shop talk"—and that is limited solely to the subject of himself. He is hesitant to talk when asked about his experiences working with his legions of leading ladies including such stars as Deborah Kerr, Joan Fontaine, Judy Garland, Ava Gardner, Lynn and Vanessa Redgrave, Liv Ullmann, and Melina Mercouri. Neither has he much to say about such male co-stars as Michael Redgrave, Marlon Brando, Alan Ladd, Stewart Granger, and Alec Guiness. He does mention that he would have starred with Garbo in her planned but eventually aborted comeback in 1949, but his basic stance is "no gossip" about his illustrious cohorts. "It's inevitable," he says, "that you get to work with the best when you've been in the business as long as I have."

Longevity has naturally become the hallmark of Mason's formidable career. Of course, survival in itself is hardly a virtue, no matter how much it is glorified in Broadway musicals, pop songs, and award shows. However, the continuing demand for the services of an actor is a tribute to the quality of his art. Mason modestly attributes his successful staying power to his ability to "understand and identify with a vast range of characters," like any other character actor. He is, however, one of that special breed of performer who has managed to transcend the limitations of overt typecasting by combining the versatility of the character actor with the easily recognizable quirks and features of the star personality. He is, in effect, what might be called a character star.

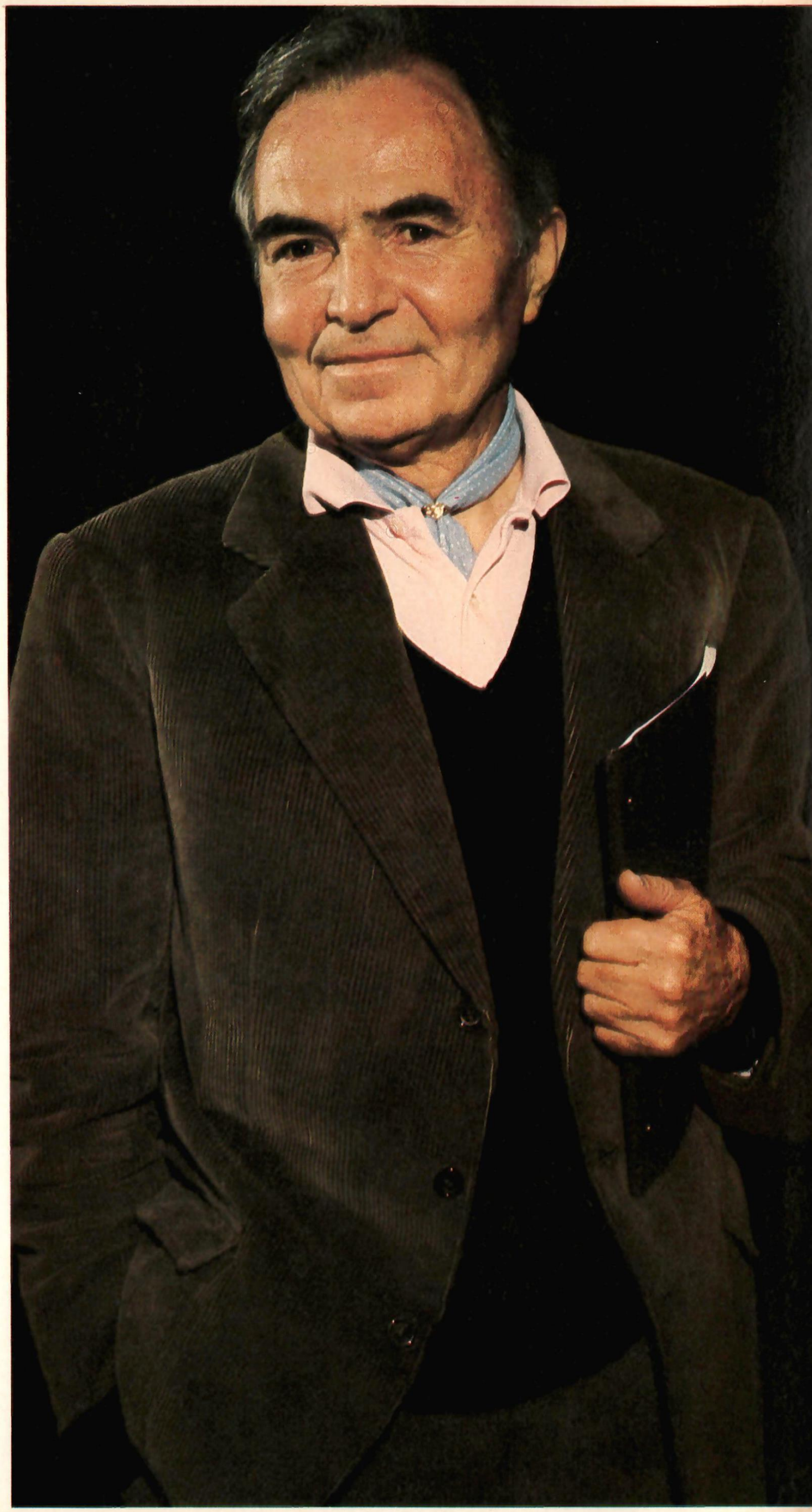
Because Mason first lit box-office bonfires with his portrayal of the passionate, knuckle-rapping lover in *The Seventh Veil* (1945), the romantic villain was his most popular and lasting screen persona. "It was a very hot time for me in England and over here, too," Mason says. "People then treated movie stars as they treat rock stars today. I remember coming from a radio station here which had barricades to keep the people back." Subsequently labeled as "a Gable in the making" and "a cultured Bogart," Mason managed to negotiate his popular image as a romantic villain into a remarkable array of characters possessing varying degrees of villainy, romance, and tragedy: as a fugitive Irish nationalist, he died under gunfire in *Odd Man Out* (1947); as the notorious Nazi leader, he shot himself in *Rommel—Desert Fox* (1951); as the noble Brutus, he impaled himself on a sword in *Julius Caesar* (1953); as the dissipated movie star Norman Maine, he swam to his death in *A Star Is Born* (1954). The frequency and fervor with which Mason's characters met their tragic fates rivaled the overwrought rigors of Bette Davis' stable of doomed women. But whatever the role,

Mason has always found a way to merge his best features with the character's with a convincing adaptability that has made him a constant on the big screen long after his Hollywood heyday in the fifties. *Georgy Girl* (1966) tops the list of his numerous credits in the sixties, and he has recently been caught up in a series of performances in *Heaven Can Wait*, *The Boys from Brazil*, *Murder by Decree*, and *Bloodline*.

At the peak of his Hollywood years, Mason not only demanded one of the highest fees in the business, but he could play almost any kind of role without damaging his reputation, box-office popularity, salary, or credibility. In view of this special status, it's surprising to hear Mason talk about how many of his major roles came to him after they had been turned down by other actors who, he says, "were afraid of disturbing their images. That never mattered to me, since I never consciously tried to build a particular image for myself." And so, for one example, it was Mason rather than first choice, Humphrey Bogart, or, second choice, Cary Grant, who effectively matched Judy Garland's stellar dramatics in *A Star Is Born*, earning an Oscar nomination for his devastating characterization of a film star's tragic road to alcoholism and suicide. According to Mason, this Hollywood melodrama is one of the few of his films he has enjoyed re-viewing as it incessantly makes the late-night TV rounds. But he feels that *Odd Man Out* (1947) is his best effort. He doesn't care to indulge in singling out his worst.

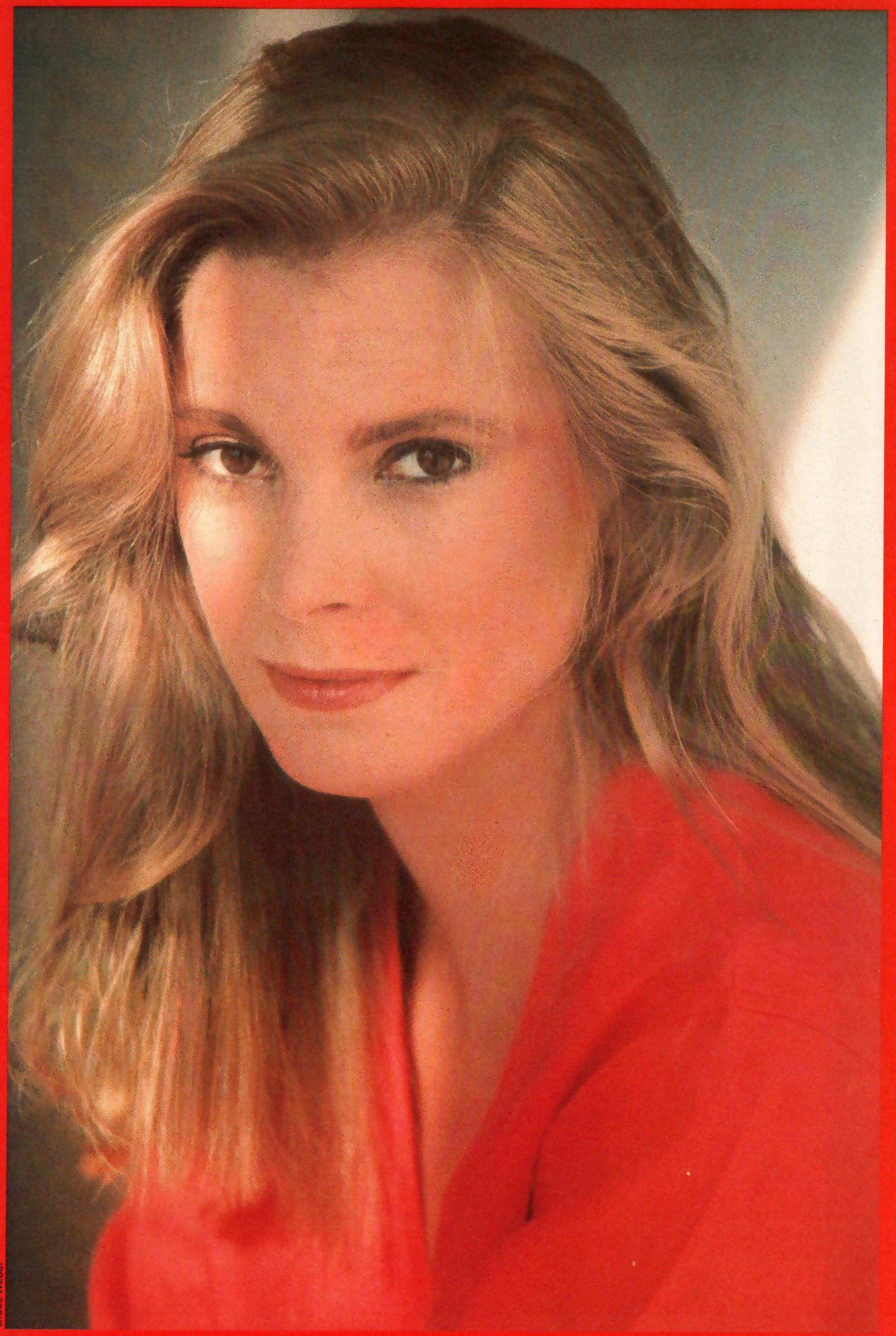
As Mason abandons his seat to dart about the suite, preparing to leave for his next appointment, he airs his disdain for the recent deluge of confessional memoirs by celebrities. "Frankly, I find them disgusting," he says with audible distaste, his voice modulating as he moves from room to room. "Today, entertainers receive a grossly disproportionate amount of publicity. I can remember when it was quite an event for an actor to make the cover of *Time* magazine, and now it happens all the time."

In the hallway, waiting for the elevator down, Mason sighs an ironic sigh and concedes the inevitability of delivering forth his own memoirs someday soon. "I will write it myself rather than have someone else get it all wrong," he notes. And with typically wry vision, he sees the process more as a practical kind of autumnal cleaning than a self-indulgent, sentimental journey. "I want to do them as a way of unloading all sorts of accumulated information. When people get to be my age, they tend to be bores, because no matter what subject is broached in conversation, they have an anecdote about it. So, you see, writing memoirs is basically a way of getting all of that boredom out of the way."



Martha Swope

With the wry sense of humor that has made him a show-biz survivor with style, James Mason states that "When people get to be my age, they tend to be bores because no matter what subject is broached in conversation, they have an anecdote about it."



Bruce Weber

INSIDE "THE BELL JAR"

MARILYN HASSETT: THE UPBEAT SIDE OF A TRAGIC TYPE

by Norma McLain Stoop

It's a matter of identity. The weather illustrates it. The day had started out surly, threatening snow. The afternoon was bland, with growing sunshine. How can one describe the day as an entity? Cloudy? Sunny? Wrong either way.

There's a similar confusion inside. As the door to her suite opens, Marilyn Hassett stands in the foyer with a big white smile, bobbing up and down and kind of clapping her hands. "You're being greeted," she exclaims, and a vision of Yum-Yum, one of the wards of the Lord High Executioner in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado*, comes to mind. But her long, straight hair is blonde, there's no shiny black wig, and it's jeans, not a kimono. I've seen Hassett on screen in *The Other Side of the Mountain* playing Jill Kinmont, the great skier felled by a tragic accident. But now she's not Jill Kinmont, either; there's no wheelchair. Nor, though her latest film is *The Bell Jar*, is she its heroine Esther Greenwood, because Esther has brown eyes and brown hair. Marilyn Hassett only has the brown eyes. The words "magnificent impostor" perch uneasily in my mind. Who is this willowy blonde, anyway?

These disturbing thoughts in no way interrupt our lively conversation from foyer to living room. As Hassett bemoans the tight schedule that prevents her from seeing anything of New York, a city with which the California actress is only slightly acquainted, it crosses my mind that the wheelchair thought was rather tacky, though later it seems less out of place when Hassett reveals that producer and film executive Frank Yablans himself remarked with surprise on seeing her a few weeks ago, "Oh, you can walk!" Hassett retorted, "Honey, that was four years ago."

So it is, indeed, a matter of identity. "We made *Mountain*," she says, "for a million two, and after it grossed twenty million, the industry in L.A. did not know who Marilyn Hassett was. It was not a Hollywood movie. There was no sex and no violence, and who wanted to go see a movie about a champion skier who got crashed up? But people *did* see it, because it was a film of hope, and we still hear from people who gave up, and now they're walking and writing me letters still, so that was the payday. I understand now, though it was hard to admit it, that the star was the movie itself, not Marilyn Hassett, even though I was in every frame. Or maybe," she puckers her generous mouth thoughtfully, "the star was Jill Kinmont. Anyway, *I* wasn't the star.

"After *Mountain*," she goes on, "I was offered absolutely *nothing*. Then they wanted to make a Jill Kinmont TV series, a whole number," she shudders with distaste, "and I talked them out of that terrible thing. Under contract and all, I made a very big statement. I said, 'Listen, you're making money off me; don't exploit me and put me on this TV stuff.' Then *Mountain II* came up and I walked into the tower at Universal with three hours of notes and livid about why they shouldn't do it and why I wouldn't be in it. I physically threw up, I was so upset that they would take Kinmont and milk her out to absolute. . . ." She props her long legs on the coffee table. "My agent had to force me not to go in with this declaration of independence. Finally, when he said, 'Listen, your boyfriend is going to direct the picture,' I did it. Larry Peerce and I—we live together now—had kinda started to date then and I thought the two of us might be able to make something of it. Okay, so I'm landed in *two* wheelchair roles. The performances in it were good, but *nobody* saw *Mountain II*."

The real reason Hassett was a good choice to play a woman who has the guts to stay with it after a bad accident was unknown to *The Other Side of the Mountain*'s producer and director when she tried out for the part, which pleases her mightily because she had dreaded being chosen for any reason but her talent. Knowing that she was one of four hundred actresses auditioning, and that the odds in her favor were slim, she was pretty casual about the whole thing.

She got a call for the audition when, in 1974, confused about the course her career was taking, she was about to pack to go to Central City, Colorado, where her sculptor-brother lives, to develop a Shakespeare company there. "I wore an old pair of pants I'd just been riding in," she giggles, "and I was so nervous that I dropped the script and when I leaned down to pick it up the pants ripped from here to the back of me." She outlines the details of the disaster with her short, unpolished nails. "I was totally exposed, and it made me laugh and I gave a great reading, and that's how I got in the first *Mountain* movie. I had nothing to lose and I had already exposed my ass, though I'm a pretty mild sort of person, not used to doing things like that. The director, Larry Peerce, was red as a beet. Maybe he'd *like* to be a little more risqué, but he almost went underneath the desk. Oh," she deadpans, "it was a nutty day."

A nutty day that started her on the path of playing in movies about desperate ladies. First, champion skier Jill Kinmont, who was paralyzed after a skiing accident, and now, in *The Bell Jar*, from American poet Sylvia Plath's account of six months in her own tragic life, she plays Esther Greenwood, the alias Plath gave herself when she wrote the book. Plath's life fell apart for the first time in 1953. Kinmont's life fell apart in 1955. Hassett's life fell apart in 1969. So it continues to be a question of identity.

"When I was nineteen and Miss All-American Apple Pie," Hassett says dispassionately, "this tragedy syndrome hadn't started. Always Schwinn bicycles and soft drinks. Whatever was All-American and hip and clean-cut, I was selling it. I played all the upbeat walk-ons. I'd done thirty-nine national commercials and they were all," she sing-songs, " 'white teeth, white teeth,' or 'Ivory, Ivory, Ivory.' But I'd just had my cameo in *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* and a TV movie-of-the-week when a friend of mine who was shooting a commercial urged me, 'Come on—you're perfect for it.' 'Really,' I insisted, 'I don't want to make anymore. I want to concentrate on acting.' But he insisted too, so I went. It turned out to be the Mini Brut, Maxi Brut commercial, and I was dressed up in a tutu and circus feathers on top of a maxi-large elephant next to an Opel car out there in nowhereland, lying on my side, looking into the camera, and saying, 'This is my Mini Brut; this is my Maxi Brut, or some such scintillating shit. On the third day of shooting, that elephant got fed up with Hollywood, threw a tantrum, blinded his trainer, and threw me underneath a truck, and I ended up with my pelvis and legs crushed. When I got up from *that*," she says philosophically, "I was driving on my way to audition for a play, was hit head-on, went through the sun roof, and smashed my skull open. By that time, no one at *all* remembered my name. So thank God, they didn't know any of this when I got *Mountain*. After, of course, they blew it up into the kind of publicity number that I'm so sick of."

The Bell Jar isn't about physical injury. It's about the psychological injury that landed Esther Greenwood—Sylvia Plath—in a mental hospital and ends when she's released after months of electric and insulin shock therapy. Plath, who had won scholarships, prizes, and awards all through school until her illness, returned to Smith after her recovery, graduated summa cum laude, and married the distinguished British poet Ted Hughes in 1956. After two children, a steadily disintegrating personal life, and deteriorating health, she committed suicide in 1963, a short time after *The Bell Jar* was published in London, having written her

Marilyn Hassett is a talented, young actress who has acquired plenty of experience playing desperate, troubled young women in such films as The Other Side of the Mountain *and currently in the film version of Sylvia Plath's autobiographical novel,* The Bell Jar. *Although she's aware of the danger of becoming typecast, Marilyn says she couldn't resist the role "because I liked the study of the woman, and the twentieth-century artist's struggle in America, and the lack of communication and where it goes, and how a cry for help is misunderstood or not heard."*

finest poems in the last harried, unhappy months of her life. In 1965 Hughes brought out the collection of these poems, *Ariel*, which immediately established Plath as a poet of uncommon gifts.

Marilyn Hassett writes poetry, loves Plath's work, and did research on the life of this unusual woman for two-and-a-half years before her and Larry Peerce's dream of making a film from *The Bell Jar* finally came true. Though she's again playing a desperate woman who is (in this case only temporarily) a survivor, none of Sylvia Plath's particular problems have been hers, though she is touched that the inmates of the "country club" psychiatric hospital where the film was shot for two weeks, became friends with her and were given to whispering conspiratorially, "You're one of us, aren't you?" "They were marvelous," she asserts, "and they imitated all the scenes I did and were a lot better than I was, sometimes."

However, there were things she had to remember not to do. Once she came back from a walk in the woods covered with poison ivy and was given a burny acid stuff that was like honey to put on, and told to go into an inmate's bathroom to apply it. While she stood naked in the shower putting on the gook, the assistant director burst in announcing, "Hurry up! You're on. We're losing the light. Get *over* there!"

"Well," Hassett admits, "losing the light is an important thing, but there I was, completely *covered* with this gluey mess. I put myself under the shower and almost panicked, but, you see," she whispers, "much as I wanted to, I couldn't scream. Because, in that situation, when *you* scream the other people scream. You can hear the reverbs!"

So far, the evidence is that the film industry has truly identified Hassett as a tragic figure. Between *Mountain II* and *The Bell Jar*, all the roles offered her were more or less of that kind. She was in negotiation for *Mr. Goodbar* (the role Diane Keaton got), but turned it down because she considered it a misrepresentation of women, though she had a great rapport with director Richard Brooks. She was up for Paul Schrader's *American Gigolo*, but pulled out because she felt the woman was a totally unsympathetic character. Awhile back, when Warren Beatty planned to do *Hardcore*, he wanted her for the version he and Schrader were working on (quite different from the version Schrader finally brought out), but he dropped the property, telling Hassett, "Oh, I want to do it so bad, but I can't—it's not me!" She also passed up a TV movie in which she would have played the distraught mother of an autistic child, and, after she finished *Bell Jar*, said, "Hey, hey, *NO*!" when she was wanted for *Haywire*.

So, before and after *The Bell Jar*, Marilyn Hassett was determinedly brushing the mask of tragedy from her work. Then, why did she do *The Bell Jar*, a poignant story about a woman who "felt like a racehorse in a world without racetracks"; who, when she wondered why her psychiatrist's office "felt so safe," realized "it was because there were no windows"; and who knew that "to the person in the bell jar, blank and stopped as a dead baby, the world itself is a bad dream"?

"I did it," she says, "because I liked the study of the woman, and the twentieth-century artist's struggle in America, and the lack of communication and where it goes, and how a cry for help is misunderstood or not heard. But I can't do that kind of role anymore," she declares. "I'm looking for a comedy now. That's what I'm going for. When *I'm* in trouble, my sense of humor comes out, and there's a dry wit I even brought to Jill Kinmont, and I try to get it up, up, up in *The Bell Jar*, because I wanted to bring out, to *redeem* the character of Esther with a very dry, brilliant wit."

Despite the roles she's played till now, Hassett is no disaster lady. She's not Jill Kinmont or Esther Greenwood. Besides, no matter how many times her name graces a theater marquee, she's not a Hollywood movie star. Even in a bugle-beaded, evening dress, she wouldn't stand a chance of fooling anybody for a minute. Marilyn Hassett is herself. A person. First, last, and, I hope, always.

SYLVIA PLATH: **LIVING A DEATH POEM**

by Harvey Elliott

Larry Peerce's film of The Bell Jar *and the novel on which it was based comes from life—Sylvia Plath's life—and the movie's appearance is reason enough to re-examine that life and the particular forces which swept it along. Her voice speaks to us with chilling authority about the pressures of being a talented woman adrift at a time when it seemed everyone else was securely moored.*

Grease was only a part of the 1950s—a small part, magnified and romanticized by nostalgia for a past no one seemed to enjoy at all when it was the present. Painful memories of rigid role-playing and crippling conformity are erased today by thoughts of tacky blue suede shoes and pink poodles stitched onto gray felt skirts. It's easy to generalize about that deceptive decade: postwar complacency giving rise to a generation of self-satisfied ciphers who voted for Eisenhower and condoned McCarthy; uniform dullness eventually marred by the emergence of rock-and-roll and Russia as forces to contend with; easy patterns of convention shattered by the complexities of the 1960s.

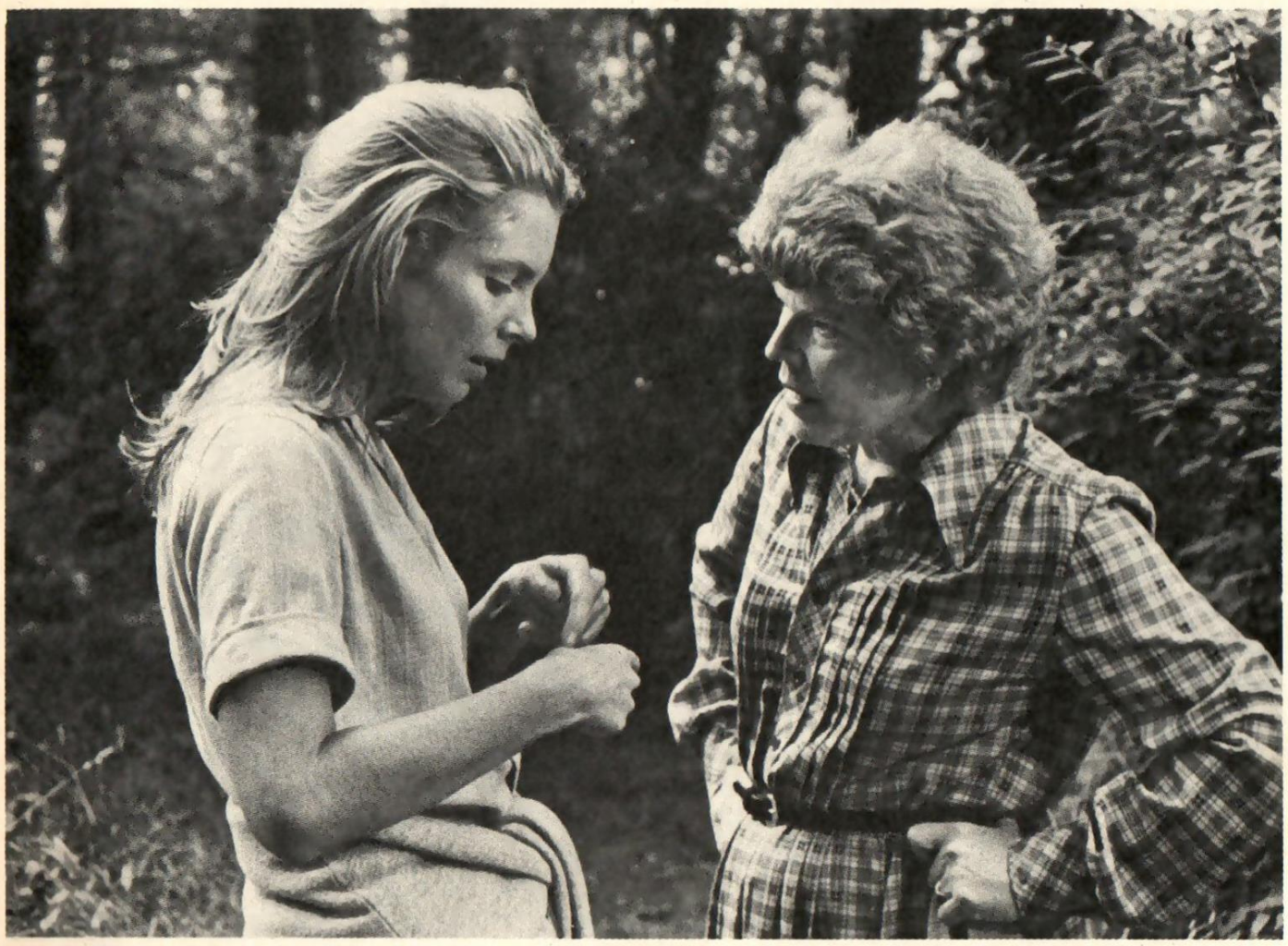
In fact, the 1950s were pretty complex, too, despite the national desire to keep the surface smooth and make that American Dream work. Poet Sylvia Plath, but for her genius, might at the time have been described as typical. At the beginning of the decade, she matriculated at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, recipient of several scholarships and prizes and perhaps the best of the brightest candidates for success. Striving equally for academic brilliance and personal popularity, she achieved both. By the end of the 1950s, she had graduated from Smith, studied two years further on a Fulbright in England, taught poetry back in Massachusetts, and finally settled, again in England, with her loving husband, giving birth in 1960 to both her first child and her first published volume of poetry. Watching her then, from afar, we would surely have admired her achievements and her attainment of that general ideal, the comfortable ethic of accomplishment.

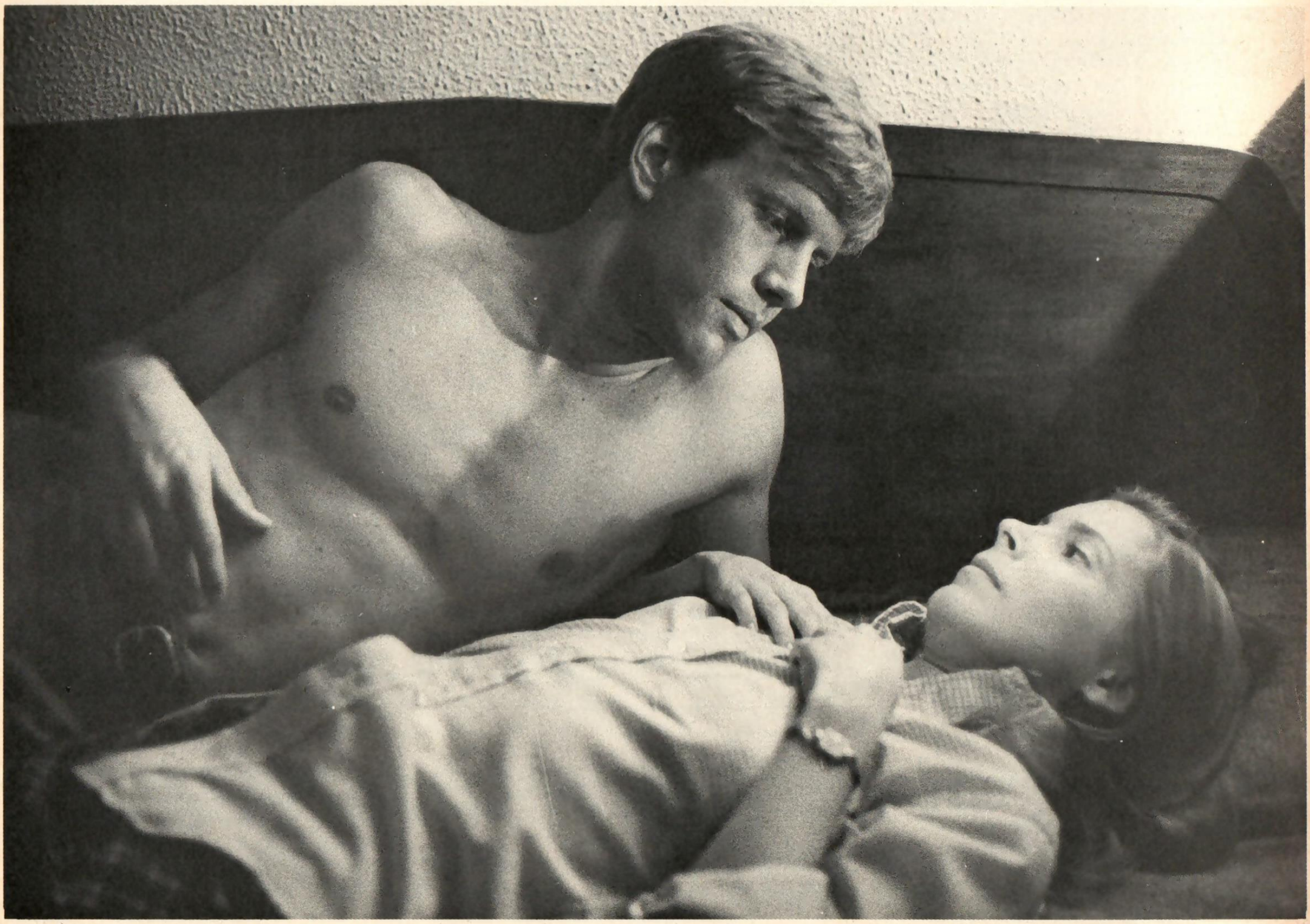
We now comprehend a lot more that's unsettling about Sylvia Plath, just as our vantage point has given us a fuller understanding of the double-edged time in which she lived and often flourished. Actually, it sometimes seems as if what we know about her life has overshadowed her brilliance, which is quite unfair. Sylvia-as-victim should never be allowed to obscure Sylvia-as-artist—even though her victimization can offer penetrating insights into that very artistry. Sylvia Plath was, first and foremost, a tremendously talented poet who broke courageously with her creative contemporaries and emerged as a new voice in American verse—albeit more greatly appreciated in England than in her native country. With startling imagery born out of the most basic and painful human emotions, she was prolific and powerful, often jotting off poem after poem as quickly as she could take pen to paper.

But Sylvia Plath was also a woman who waged a constant battle against herself and her time, her very womanness, and even her work. In her only novel *The Bell Jar*, she offers up a naked testimonial to her torment in the form of an almost purely autobiographical scream of pain. The book, published by Sylvia in London under a pseudonym in an effort to clear her mind of the past and move on, is a devastatingly accurate portrait of a bright young girl who seems to have everything, but who slips into despondency, depression, and eventual nervous collapse and attempted suicide before emerging, slowly, from under a bell jar of compressed emotion. "To the person in the bell jar," she wrote, "black and stopped as a dead baby, the world itself is a bad dream." One month after the book was published to glowing reviews, the bell jar must have descended again, for Sylvia, alone in her London flat, turned the gas on and killed herself.

Though some friends and relatives were rearranged—"dismembered," as Sylvia liked

As the disoriented, suicidal young poet in The Bell Jar, *Marilyn Hassett confers with her psychiatrist, Anne Jackson (above, at right); vows to join her deceased father (above, at far right); makes love to Jameson Parker (at right).*





to call it—for her storytelling purposes in *The Bell Jar*, it remains a near-documentary account of the conflicting forces that conspired to destroy Sylvia Plath. She calls herself Esther Greenwood but writes in first person, and many of her observations are identical to those she voices in her real-life letters to her mother. The twin bogeys of Expectation and Achievement haunted Sylvia from the moment she entered Smith through to that last, cold winter when the poet and the housewife simply could not be resolved.

Aurelia Plath remembers her daughter's glee when, while a senior in high school and out on a blind date, the boy asked her what kind of grades she got. When Sylvia replied, "All A's, of course," the boy sarcastically responded that she didn't look the type. Sylvia returned home exultant, exclaiming, "They didn't believe me! They didn't believe me!" When she arrived at Smith, she made a conscious effort to create an image of the All-Around Girl, often suppressing her intelligence in order to fit in. On the other hand, she was always conscious of the grants and scholarships that had been conferred upon her and was anxious not to disappoint her benefactors. Add to this her own personal muse, which was driving her to write poetry that often revealed some of the conflicts these other two roles were creating. Later, in *The Bell Jar*, Esther Greenwood would spurn a marriage proposal from her college boyfriend by saying, "I'll always be torn between two things like the city or the country or between being a poet or a housewife . . . I'll probably spend the rest of my life flying back and forth between one mutually exclusive thing and another."

Her mother later wrote that "the pressure that developed from her involvement in all these areas was periodically overwhelming, both physically and psychically," and though her academic glory was untarnished, Sylvia's moods ranged from euphoric all the way back to black. Never able to picture herself a wife and mother, but hesitant about a career ("Ugh! I hate that word!"), she found it safer to drift along with the choices already made for her. Unlike many creative people, she was never a nonconformist and, in fact, spurned the nascent beatnik fringe developing among many of the smarter scholarship girls. Impeccably groomed and relentlessly social, Sylvia "fit in" through her first three years at Smith and was chosen for a one-month guest editorship at *Mademoiselle* magazine in New York City for the summer of 1953.

It was, seemingly, the fulfillment of any young coed's dreams. Here was Sylvia—a young writer, already published in *Mademoiselle* and *Seventeen* and *The Smith Review*, and a virtual shoo-in to a publishing job, should she want it, after her graduation. In actuality, she was experiencing a severe dichotomy, once again, between reality and expectation—and even she seemed to lie to herself about it. In her own scrapbook description to that month in New York, Sylvia wrote:

> . . . Fantastic, fabulous, and all other inadequate adjectives go to describe the four gala and chaotic weeks I worked as guest managing Ed . . . . living in luxury at the Barbizon, I edited, met celebrities, was feted and feasted . . . . *

The same experience is described in another mood by Sylvia in the last letter to her brother written from New York City:

> . . . Smith seems like a simple, enchanting, bucolic existence compared to the dry, humid, breathless wasteland of the cliffdwellers . . . . I will let you know what train my coffin will come in on. **

She did go home, to a suburb of Boston where her mother and brother lived and to the despairing news that she had not been accepted for Frank O'Connor's short-story writing class, which would have filled the rest of the summer. She found existence "vacuous," wandered aimlessly around her home, unable to read or concentrate, much less write. Her mother remembers "an endless stream of self-deprecation, self-accusation." She even tried taking a shorthand course so she could "get a job to support my writing—if I can ever write again," but she couldn't catch on, and this failure only increased her feelings of inadequacy.

Finally, Mrs. Plath sought psychiatric help for Sylvia, which took the form of rough, impersonal shock treatments, alienating her further. On August 24, while her mother was visiting a friend, Sylvia broke open the metal box containing the sleeping pills her doctor had prescribed for her, crawled into a nook in the Plath basement behind a stack of firewood, and swallowed the entire contents of the bottle. She had left a note to her mother: "Have gone for a long walk. Will be home tomorrow." On the third day, after Mrs. Plath had phoned the police and Sylvia's disappearance had become a matter of nationwide notoreity, her brother heard low moans coming from the basement area, and they recovered Sylvia, who was regaining consciousness after she had failed to die.

Through a long period of rehabilitation—largely through the generous auspices of her Smith benefactress, Olive Higgins Prouty, the author of *Stella Dallas* and an understanding veteran, twenty-five years earlier, of a similar mental breakdown—Sylvia began her long climb back to "normalcy," with all the treacherous duplicity that word implies. This, in fact, is where *The Bell Jar* ends, with Esther Greenwood rejoining the outside world with a cautious query: "How did I know that someday—at college, in Europe, somewhere, anywhere—the bell jar, with its stifling distortions, wouldn't descend again?" For Sylvia, as for Esther, the future, though, looked rosier, as she returned to Smith to complete her senior year, with some of the old demons subdued but none exorcised. In *A Closer Look at Ariel*, a compassionate and thoughtful memory of Sylvia's senior year by her roommate, Nancy Hunter Steiner, we see Sylvia's moods and insecurities and demands return time and again in new forms, while she still had an intense desire to conform to the Smith idea of what a young woman should be. Her dalliances with romance and sex were disastrous—the men she met were hardly her intellectual equals, and the exception was a brilliant, crude, and insensitive professor who raped her. She was still a troubled woman, but when she won a graduate Fulbright fellowship to study in Cambridge, England, her spirits soared, and there followed the most productive and happy years of her life.

She was creative, stimulated, frequently published, and generally thrilled with her life there, especially after she met and married Ted Hughes, a man she admired as a poet as well as loved. She was his intellectual peer, and for the next few years, both in America and back in Britain where they eventually settled to raise a family, they supported each other in their respective and mutual creativity. It seemed almost as if the two sides of her dream—to be an artist, and therefore independent; and to be a wife, and therefore conforming—had coalesced, for after the birth of her daughter in 1960, she seemed even happier, even though she had less time for writing. It took a few more years, during which a child was lost and a second born, for Sylvia's strain to reappear. The marriage became troubled: professional jealousies, yes, but personal ones also, when Ted began seeing another woman. Sylvia felt more and more constrained by her life as a housewife, alternately wondering where her independence had gone and then making lavish domestic plans for new houses, new reconciliations, new futures.

Ted finally left her and their home in Devon, and she moved back to London to start afresh. It made her happy to find a flat in a building which had once housed W.B. Yeats. Possibly she could have survived alone, but the winter of 1962-63 was the harshest in a century and a half, and the sicknesses and chills and frequent lack of heat depressed her. The poems continued to come, sometimes feverishly, but her soul could not be soothed even by her own creativity. On the morning of February 11, 1963, she ended her life, ten years after her first attempt. During that ten years, she had attained what she had outlined, even beyond her most romantic dreams—success, marriage, renown, children, even a modicum of peace. *The Bell Jar* was written to exorcise demons, though she wrote her mother that it was only "a potboiler." Secretly she hoped it would never surface in America, because of the hurt it would cause her family. It is probably impossible to tell if the demons were exorcised or simply exercised; why, after all the setbacks and regained ground, did it all end that particular February morning? Was there something she never

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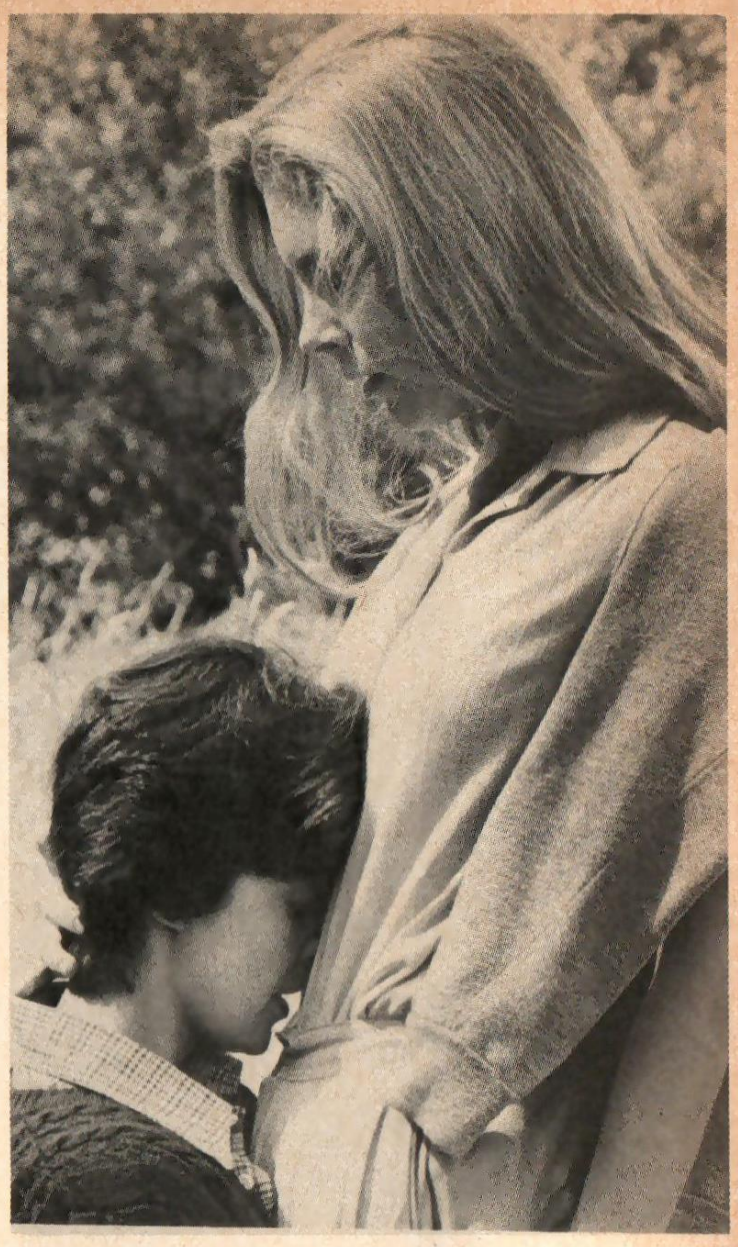
*Lois Ames, "Sylvia Plath: A Biographical Note," The Bell Jar *by Sylvia Plath (New York: Bantam Books, 1974).*

**Sylvia Plath,* Letters Home: Correspondence 1950 through 1963, *ed. Aurelia Schoeber Plath (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).*

Julie Harris plays the perplexed but understanding mother of poet, Esther Greenwood, played by Marilyn Hassett, in The Bell Jar, *an Avco Embassy Pictures release.*

Rollie McKenna



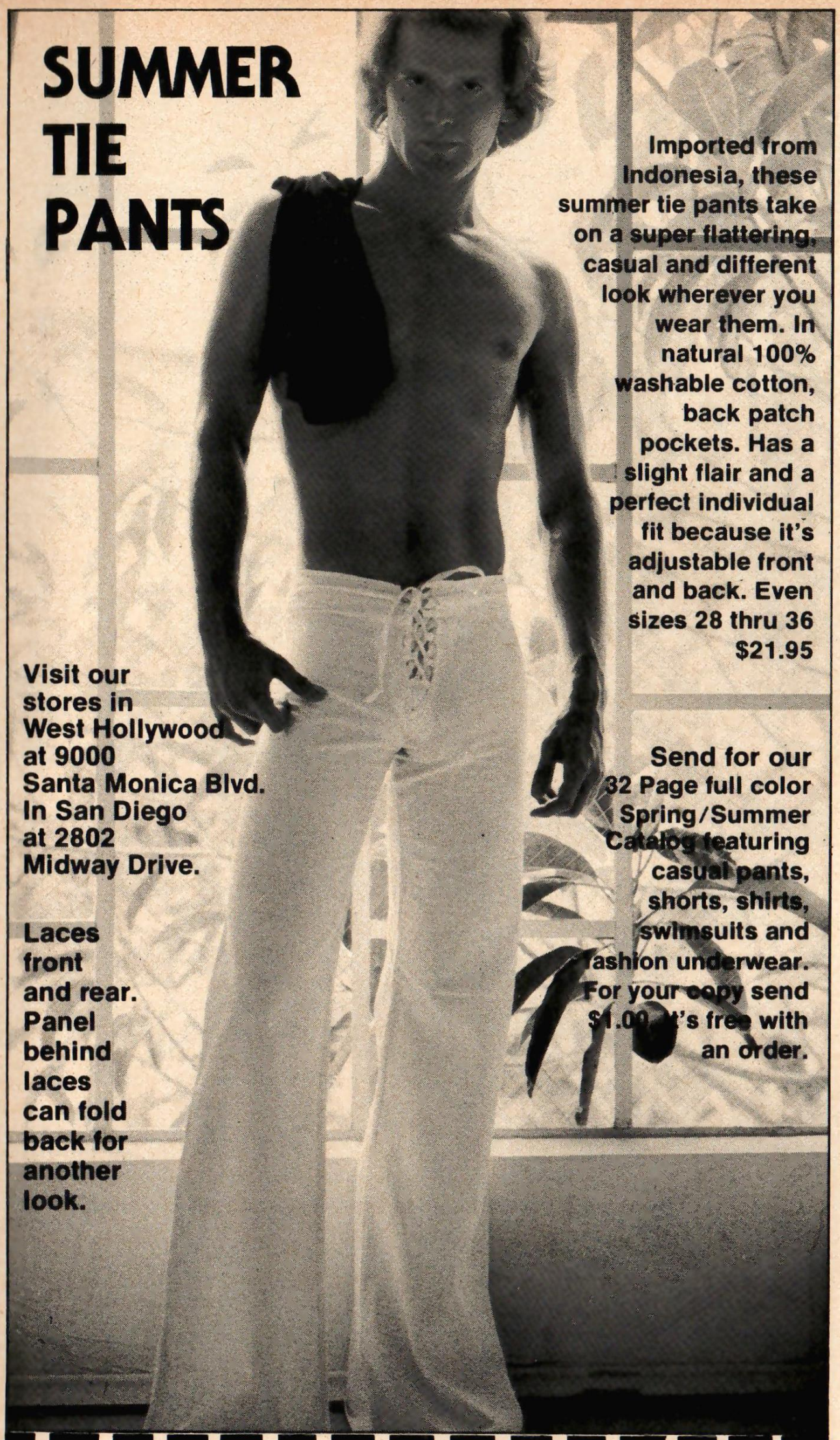
As a brilliant student-poet suffering a nervous breakdown, Marilyn Hassett consoles her friend and fellow mental patient, Donna Mitchell, in The Bell Jar.

attained, even after all she accomplished?

Perhaps. Sylvia's mother remembers a particularly startling statement Sylvia made when she was coming out of her unconscious state after being found in the Plath cellar. Her first words were an anguished "Oh, no!" and then, as they wheeled her into the ambulance, Sylvia's mother told her she was only to think of complete rest and that, with medical care, recovery would follow. Sylvia didn't seem convinced, and she simply looked at her mother and replied, "Oh, if I could only be a freshman again. I so wanted to be a *Smith* woman."

Sylvia Plath, who killed herself in the early 1960s, is probably better known than her poetry because of her autobiographical novel, The Bell Jar. *It is a devastatingly accurate portrait of a bright young girl who seems to have everything, but who slips into despondency and eventual nervous collapse and attempted suicide before emerging from under a bell jar of compressed emotion. Several years later and one month after the book was published, the bell jar must have descended again, for Sylvia, alone in her London flat, turned the gas on and killed herself.*

SUMMER TIE PANTS



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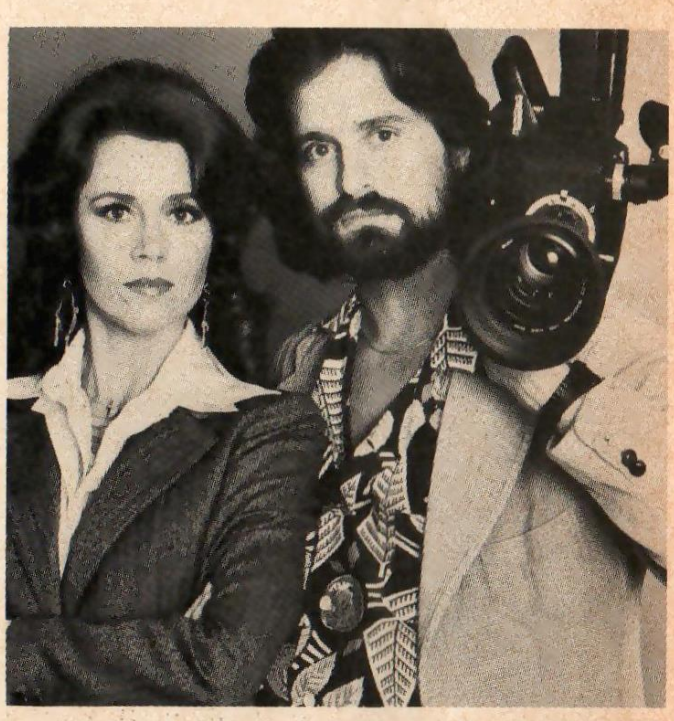
(continued from p. 28)

less, long-haired youngsters who traveled in loving packs with a mystifying sense of betrayed innocence burned into their hearts. Treat Williams personifies with awesome conviction a grubby Galahad searching for a Grail he'll never find, but leaving behind him a legacy of unwavering love, trust, and selflessness. His is acting of superior significance. John Savage is so good as an Oklahoman bound for Vietnam that one thinks of him, all through his last days of freedom with his new friends and during his Army training, as an Oklahoman bound for Vietnam, rather than as John Savage playing a role. This is the highest praise I can give. Dorsey Wright is just right as Hud; Annie Golden makes an adorable expectant mother; and Cheryl Barnes stops the show bemoaning man's cruelty in song. There's a great deal of fun and a great measure of sadness in *Hair*, a maelstrom of music and movement that so engulfs you in its spell that it's like reaching out to the screen and touching the '60s at the same time that the '60s are reaching out from the screen and touching your heart. Bravo, Milos Forman; every film you make shines with authenticity and vitality. I can't wait to see *Hair* again.

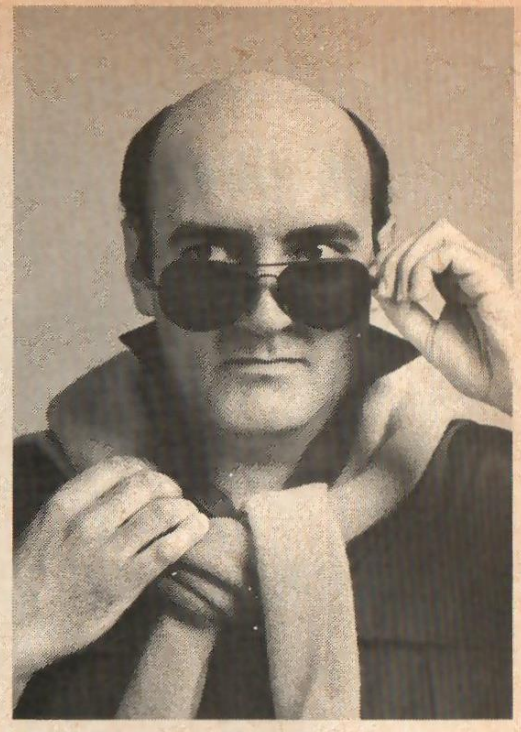


Jane Fonda, playing an ambitious, TV soft-news reporter, teams up with independent cameraman Michael Douglas when they accidentally come across some chilling "hard news" in Columbia Pictures' The China Syndrome.

The China Syndrome (produced by Michael Douglas, directed by James Bridges, Columbia) is a terrifically exciting, brilliantly directed film that sweats suspense. The tense screenplay has you holding on to your seatbelts at all times, and James Crabe's photography is equally fine in light and shadow. This is a story of consciences and kings: the consciences of reliable men and women and the tough pragmatism of kings of industry. As a shift supervisor in a nuclear energy plant, Jack Lemmon gives the performance of his career. His keen eyes pinpoint his feelings as

Nothing happened when he put on his hot new shades...

until he put on his CoolHeadLuke!



PHOTOGRAPHY: ROY VOLKMANN

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he gradually grows from an A1 company man to a first-class hero, a delineation of character that is astounding. Jane Fonda sends off sparks as a soft-news TV gal who gets, and fights to keep, a hard-news story about the cover-up of an "accident" at the nuclear plant, and, in the process, finds out the hard facts about hard news. She's wonderful. Mike Douglas couldn't be better as a crusading TV cameraman, and the number of excellent supporting players is amazing. Peter Donat, Wilford Brimley, Richard Herd, Paul Larson, and Scott Brady shine with a steady light. Production values in this exceptional motion picture are handsome, and director James Bridges knows all there is to know about the thriller genre. But, terrifying as it is, this film is much more than a thriller. It is a close examination of conscience and responsibility as well as an exposé of how far big money will go to protect its interests. *The China Syndrome* is a film to see and to recommend to your friends. It will keep you on the edge of your seat as it subtly defines the media's responsibilities, the people's choices, and the extra grain of sand that turns an everyday man into a selfless hero. It's a film full of an urgency that cannot be dismissed. Power is what *The China Syndrome* is all about.

Marilyn Hassett gives a totally distinctive performance as Esther Greenwood in **The Bell Jar** (produced by Jerrold Brandt, Jr. and Michael Todd Jr., directed by Larry Peerce, Avco Embassy). Esther is the name American poet Sylvia Plath gave herself in her devastating novel about six significant months in her life in 1953: months that laid the groundwork for her eventual suicide 10 years later. The story is a tragic one and Larry Peerce has brought it to the screen with honesty, but the tempo of his direction is too unchangingly adagio, making the film move too slowly to sustain interest. Marvin Wallowitz's editing is choppy and often inexplicably random, and his transitions are far too awkward. It is Hassett's acting (abetted by fine work from Julie Harris, Anne Jackson, and Barbara Barrie) that carries the picture, making it almost a one-woman show, something that tempts one to call *The Bell Jar* too definitely a "woman's movie." Gerald Hirschfeld's imaginative photography is a distinct asset, and Peerce is to be praised for drawing such good performances from his four leading ladies, and also from Robert Klein and Thaao Penghlis in smaller roles. By and large, however, the film doesn't work. The tragedy is drawn so inordinately darkly that even the truth becomes unconvincing. There is always light as well as shadow in even the saddest life, but because Esther Greenwood lives exclusively in the shadows, the viewer is sometimes hard put to see her clearly.

It is hard to believe that **The Promise** (produced by Fred Weintraub and Paul Heller, directed by Gilbert Cates, Universal) is a 1979 movie. Its attitudes and dialogue are so dreadfully outdated as to make it smack of a museum piece: the kind of a museum piece that reminds one that the good old days weren't so great after all. Garry Michael White's screenplay is that of a soap opera—

Photo by Andy Rodriguez

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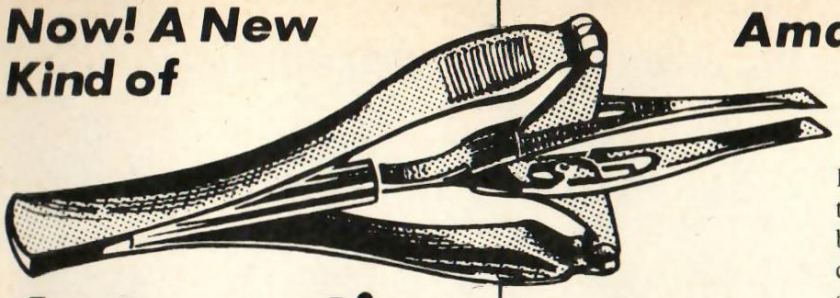

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but not one of today's soap operas in which the melodramatics, at least, take heed of today's problems. The farfetched story of *The Promise*, with its perfect young lovers, its wicked mother, its mistaken identities, its coincidental happy ending, abounds with clichés, the kind that are the foundations of hack writing. However, one is impressed with the drive with which its two stars, especially the charismatic Stephen Collins, have striven to rise above the shoddy material of the story. In several scenes, the hauntingly beautiful Kathleen Quinlan demonstrates how very strong her acting talent is, and Collins, throughout the film, demonstrates his powerful presence and lends credibility to even the most outrageous scenes. Quinlan and Collins are extremely able, and I look forward with pleasure to seeing them in vehicles worthier of their gifts. Gilbert Cates' direction and Ralph Woolsey's photography are run-of-the-mill, and fine composer David Shire had to hide his light under a bushel to come up with music to match the sentimental sop of *The Promise*'s story.

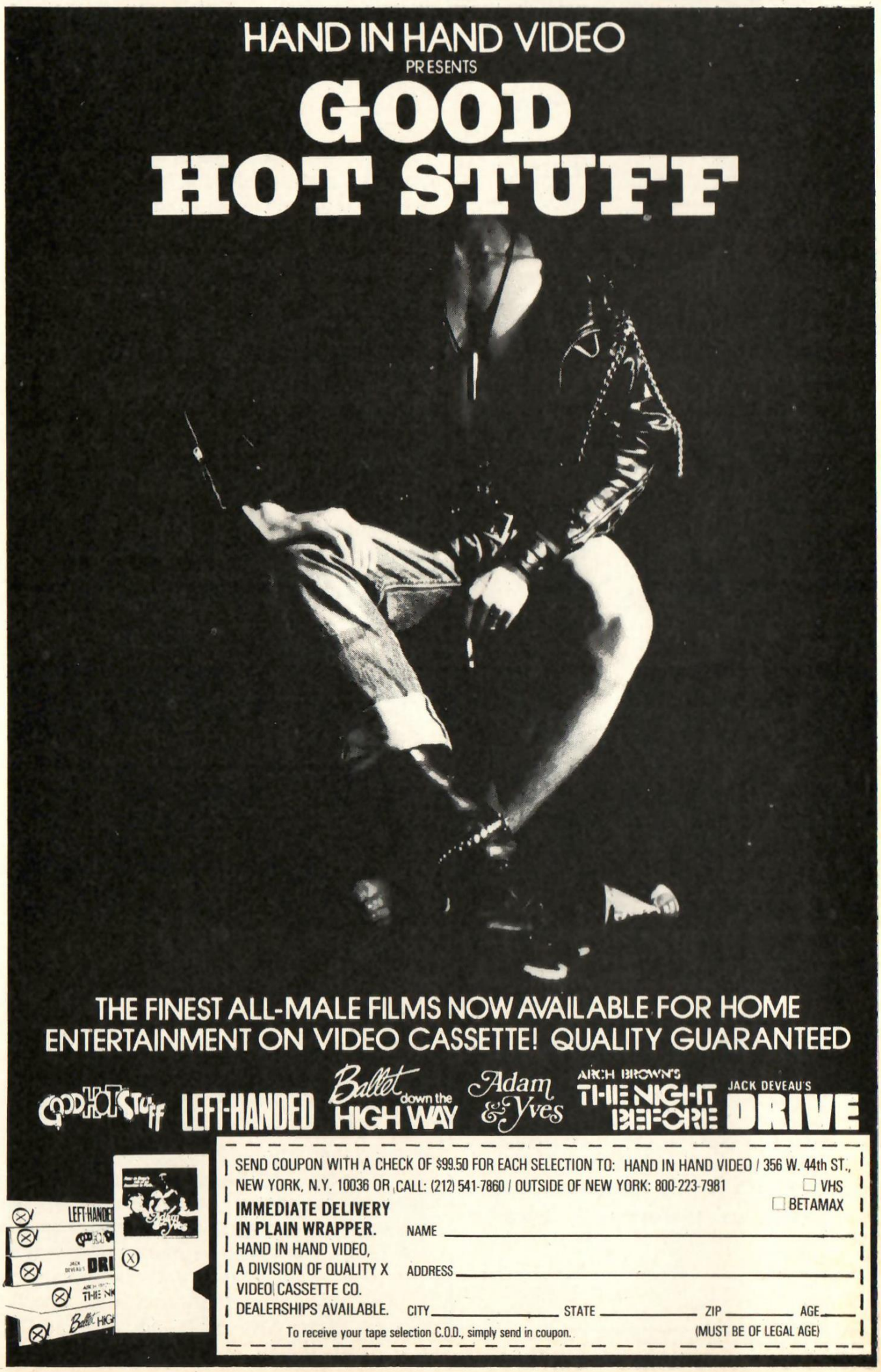
Highly emotional and deeply personal, **Remember My Name** (produced by Robert Altman, written and directed by Alan Rudolph, a Lagoon Release for Circle Associates) reminds me of a desperate cry for help unheard because someone was playing disco music on a stereo in the next apartment. The consistently fine acting of Berry Berenson and Anthony Perkins make the tenuous marriage of Neil and Barbara Curry credible, and the high style of Geraldine Chaplin's portrayal of Neil's ex-wife, who's done a lot of thinking and planning during 12 years in prison and who's determined to blow his new marriage to hell and back, lends unpredictable explosiveness. This offbeat film seems like a sad, sad, haunting blues song, which is amplified by Alberta Hunter's magnificent rendition of 10 of her old classics and the lovely new title song, all sung by the great lady herself. This unbelievably moving soundtrack alone (produced by the distinguished John Hammond for Columbia Records) is worth the price of admission and serves as the film's core. Seldom have I heard music used so intelligently and to such good advantage in advancing a film's plot and outlining its characters. Like people in real life (and in songs) these characters behave impulsively, irrationally, recklessly, and selfishly. They don't give a fig for consequences. And, of course, the most well-meaning ones take it on the chin. Moses Gunn's acting is more than excellent, and if you don't already remember Geraldine Chaplin's name, you will after you see her wonderful work in *Remember My Name*. Alan Rudolph's screenplay has guts and vision, and his direction is on the beam. There's an unusual luminosity to Tak Fujimoto's realistic photography. You'll find suspense, excitement, puzzlement, and a mordant sense of humor in this unusual, rather disturbing film, and besides finding out what happens to the innocent victims in its story, you'll learn about the innocent victims of a terrible earthquake in Budapest.

Beautiful Marthe Keller dies early in

Fedora (produced and directed by Billy Wilder, United Artists) and the movie dies shortly after. This is not to say that Miss Keller isn't in the rest of the film, which is an endless flashback explaining why the lady she portrays chose to throw herself in front of a train. *Fedora* is not a motion picture, in the true sense, but rather a series of stilted recitations. Sarah Bernhardt would have been unable to imbue the terrible dialogue of I.A.L. Diamond and Billy Wilder's screenplay with any emotion, and certainly the unfortunate all-star cast doesn't. William Holden, Marthe Keller, Jose Ferrer, Arlene Francis, and Michael York walk woodenly through Fedora's frames, with only Henry Fonda, in a cameo role, seeming fully alive. Billy Wilder's usual sharp dialogue and sardonic wit have been temporarily buried, though his disenchantment is still apparent in this very bad movie. I feel saddest for Thomas Tryon, who wrote the clever story *Fedora*'s based on and has to gaze at his brainchild's ultimate humiliation.

In moments all through **Despair** (produced by Peter Märthesheimer, directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, New Line Cinema) one is stopped cold in one's tracks by Fassbinder's sense of style, his keen and analytical sense of scene, and his flawless sense of time. In moments, yes, but not in the film's totality. This is Fassbinder's first big-budget film and, unfortunately, more was less. It is not completely the brilliant young German director's fault that his most ambitious undertaking so far lacks the cutting wit, the spareness, and the humanity of his earlier films. Tom Stoppard's screenplay (from Vladimir Nabokov's novel) is unaccountably dull, and Dirk Bogarde's performance is flat and labored. Michael Ballhaus' photography and Peer Raben's music are interesting, but it is Rolf Zehetbauer's art direction, Dagmar Schauberger's costumes, and Herbert Strabel and Jochen Schumacher's set designs that contribute most to whatever merit *Despair* has.

Despite its fantastic cast (Anthony Quinn, James Mason, Malcolm McDowell, Patricia Neal, Michael Lonsdale, Marcel Bozzufi, and Kay Lenz) **The Passage** (produced by John Quested in association with Maurice Binder and Lester Goldsmith, directed by J. Lee Thompson, United Artists) doesn't succeed on any level. Its dialogue is funny when it's meant to be serious, and it ends up being one of the most hilarious comedies of the year, though it's meant to be a suspenseful story of patriots trying to escape the Nazis over the Pyrenées during World War II. Blame Bryce Nicolaysen's screenplay (based on his book *Perilous Passage*), or blame J. Lee Thompson's lackluster direction. It doesn't really matter who you single out for blame because the overly violent film is a tremendous bore from start to finish, portentous and overblown throughout, with its strong cast never for one moment helping it come to life. Mike Reed, director of photography, is perhaps the most successful of the film's team, but at least he had the mountains to work with. Forget *The Passage* if you place a value on the hours of your day.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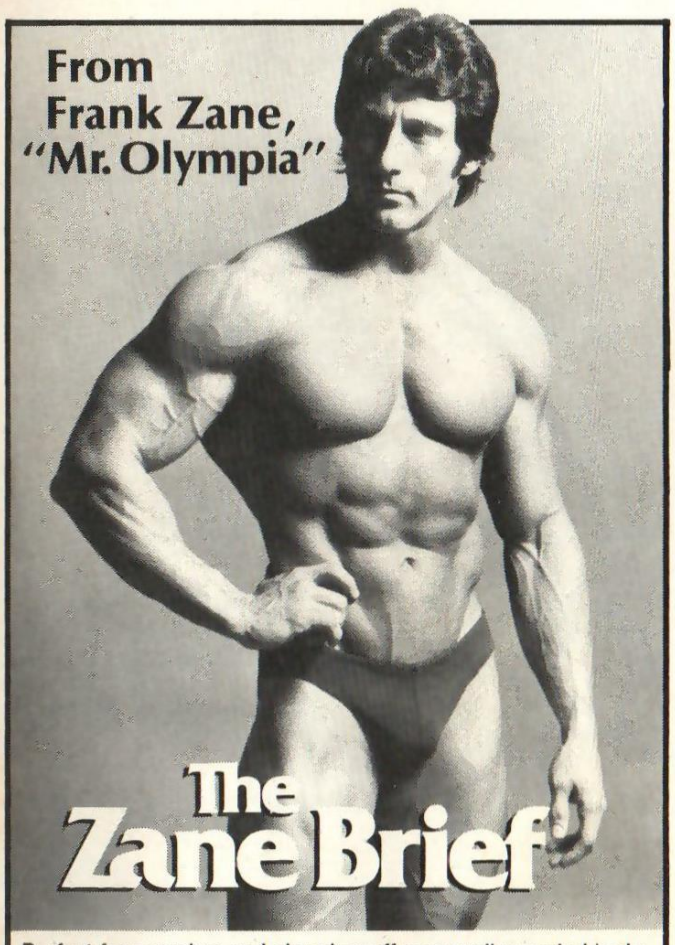

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More Films

by Martin Mitchell

The car crash that occurs during the opening credits of **Old Boyfriends** (produced by Edward R. Pressman and Michele Rappaport, directed by Joan Tewkesbury, Avco Embassy) remains unexplained until more than halfway through the film, in which a woman in her late 30s, a psychiatrist who may or may not be disturbed herself, drives across country on a voyage of self-discovery that has her tracking down and seducing the men who first dated her. The incident is one among many, by turns beguiling and exasperating and sometimes both at once, that make this movie a peculiar blend of the terrific and the terrible. It's hard to know where to assign fault for the many failings that keep the picture from being the major work it almost is. The sound is monotonous and empty and the score (by David Shire) interesting but inappropriate: suspenseful tones accompany ordinary events, and the music intrudes into conversations. One is tempted to cite the inexperience of director Tewkesbury, whose first feature this is, particularly for her tendency to exaggerate (the love scenes are even clumsier than life); to contrive (a bath scene was included simply because the director liked the color of the tub); or to fake (Vancouver, for some strange reason, is supposed to be Milwaukee). On the other hand, who deserves the credit for the many brilliant, original things the film contains? Executive producer and co-scenarist Paul Schrader *(Taxi Driver, Blue Collar)* has the credentials, but anyone who gives a woman on an odyssey a name like Diane Cruise is far from blameless.

Viveca Lindfors (right) plays the overprotective mother of deaf Rosemarie (Amy Irving), who is beginning to hear a new love song within herself in United Artists' romantic Voices.

Diane's near-midlife crisis takes her around the nation as she re-encounters Jeff, a moderately successful filmmaker with a teenage daughter; Eric, an overgrown rock-and-roller; and Wayne, the troubled brother of her first flame, killed in Vietnam. Overall, the trip is a disaster. Jeff, who takes Diane seriously, is too much for her restless spirit to handle; Eric, who leads his band in '50s

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songs for high school dances, is all foul talk and no action; and Wayne, paralyzed by assumed guilt for his brother's death, is traumatized by Diane's emotional and sexual advances. She, however, does at least come to trust the present. At film's end, in a series of lovely, touching sequences, she appears to have found some happiness.

The director has mixed results with her actors. Those familiar with Talia Shire, who plays Diane, from *Rocky* will be struck not only by her attractiveness but also by her ability to play such a different, commanding role. Yet there are quirks in her performance that match the general indecision and inconsistency of the film. Her mood shifts and odd gestures might signal Diane's personality disorder, except that they are most pronounced before any such disorder has been cogently suggested. Because he takes comedy so seriously, John Belushi, as the overage greaser Eric, is hilarious, yet he can't convey the serious aspects of his role. Keith Carradine, as the boyish Wayne, is somewhat better than usual with a more substantial version of the mildly kooky part he almost always plays. Buck Henry and John Houseman are good in brief appearances. But it is Richard Jordan, who fills his role to perfection as Jeff, who is the movie's only unqualified success. Still, as a serious and worthwhile effort to explore present and recent climates of national, relational, and personal health, *Old Boyfriends* deserves the benefit of the doubt, and I would encourage you to see it. Though erratic and severely flawed, the film is ambitious, fascinating, sometimes dazzling (photography by William A. Fraker), and certainly memorable. It *could* have been the best American movie in quite some time.

A prologue to **Real Life** (produced by Penelope Spheeris, directed by Albert Brooks, Paramount) announces: "In 1973, the Public Broadcasting System presented a 12-hour series, 'An American Family,' in which film segments of a real family's life—the Bill Louds of Santa Barbara—were shown on television.... The motion picture you are about to see is the next step. It documents not only the real life of a real family, but of the real people who came to film that family, and the effect they had on each other." This reflects the ridiculous assumption behind such TV documentaries that their makers do not influence their subjects. In his brilliant, off-the-wall comedy, Albert Brooks, besides deflating the kind of language, like the above, that always accompanies such grand intentions, illustrates every conceivable way in which the filmmakers could have—indeed can't help having—an effect on those filmed.

First of all, Brooks, caught between a producer who would prefer to employ stars and a human-behavior organization that is overseeing the project, chooses as his subjects the Yeager family (Charles Grodin, Frances Lee McCain, and two children) simply because they live in Arizona—and who wants to do winter filming in Wisconsin? Things get underway as soon as Brooks has moved into a comfortable house across the street from the family and dismissed the union-

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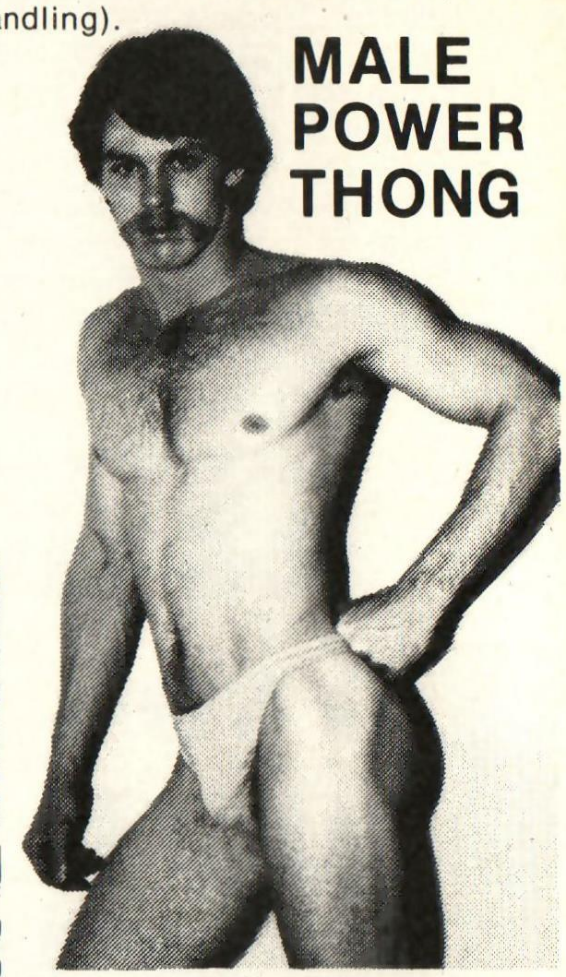

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appointed crew members he has no need for. He welcomes the Yeagers back from a studio-sponsored vacation in Hawaii and prepares them for his filmed study: "Be yourselves! Break a leg!" But everything bogs down when Mrs. Yeager's grandmother dies and Mr. Yeager, a veterinarian, kills a horse in surgery. Depression sets in, and Brooks begins to despair as the days go by uneventfully. He makes several attempts to stimulate movement—for instance, by meeting Mrs. Yeager privately and by visiting the family dressed as a clown. Finally the gloom lifts, and Brooks exults. "Now we'll show the French what montage is all about," he exclaims, and we are treated to slow-motion sequences of the family romping hand-in-hand through the zoo, where they watch the turtles cavort, also in slow motion. Later, Brooks ponders how to end the film after everyone else connected with it has either stormed off the set or lost interest.

Real Life is a work of comic genius, though it may not strike people as funny. Brooks' humor is extremely dry and rarefied; his aim is purposely ambiguous, producing uneasy snickers rather than bursts of laughter. And the film is essentially a single joke that, at almost two hours, may be too extended. On the other hand, Brooks has an acute sense of the absurd; indeed his thing is to examine every aspect of something *ad absurdum,* participating personally while being many times removed. At one point in the movie, the local TV station, believing that what Brooks is doing is newsworthy, sends a camera crew over to film the filming. Brooks throws them out for interrupting. Such inspired madness, actually amounting simply to precise observation of prevailing insanity, should be encouraged. Me, I can't wait to see *Real Life* again. At the very beginning, when Brooks was describing the modern, supposedly unobtrusive equipment to be used—including cameras worn over the head that make their operators look like Martians—I developed an incurable case of the giggles that made me miss some of what followed, and that recurred as soon as I returned to the real life outside the theater.

The Great Bank Hoax (produced by Ralph Rosenblum and Joseph Jacoby, directed by Joseph Jacoby, Warner Bros.) is an amiable, easygoing comedy caper describing what happens when three small-town bank officials raid their own vault as a means of accounting for some inconveniently embezzled funds. The embezzler, a clerk in the bank, realizes the enormity of his crime, carried out gradually and almost unawares, and attempts to return the money. While a lot of people are running around town with large amounts of cash they would rather not have (this is where the church and its more genuinely devious Reverend Manigma enters the picture), others hear about the surplus money and try to put the squeeze on its nervous possessors. The result is a complicated

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mess that never quite gets straightened out.

The film is completely absorbing because writer-director Jacoby takes us on a leisurely pace through the convolutions of the story, letting us savor the ingenious twists and allowing the comedy to emerge from the situation, without resort to tricks and chases. The casting is perfect and the acting, witty and unforced, a joy to watch. Burgess Meredith, Richard Basehart, and Ned Beatty as the embarrassed officials are superb, as are Paul Sand as the bewildered embezzler and Michael Murphy as the cagey reverend. Their clever characterizations and obvious rapport help give the film a sense of fun that makes it a source of great pleasure.

Considering that it is the love story of a singer and a deaf girl, **Voices** (produced by Joe Wizan, directed by Robert Markowitz, United Artists) could very easily have become soapy. Made, though, with sensitivity and restraint, it is as absorbing as it is quietly moving. Instead of jerking tears out of the girl's formidable handicap, John Herzfeld's script lets us understand, in some small way at least, what it is like to be deaf. Without overdoing it, the filmmakers put us in the girl's place by shutting off the sound when we most need it. And when Drew first visits Rosemarie's home, we are as startled and as fascinated as he is by the accouterments of a soundless world—gadgets that would be luxuries were they not absolutely essential—such as lights that respond to the doorbell and a typewriterlike telephone attachment that sends and receives messages. Later we share Drew's sense of absurdity at having asked someone to turn down a radio Rosemarie can't even hear.

Good comic incidents further ward off any threat of mawkishness. Drew's family, three generations of abandoned men who are better at squabbling and squandering than at running their laundry business, express concern at finding a book on sign language in the young singer's room. Perhaps it's all those loud songs, they think. After they learn the book's real purpose, they are delighted if a little uneasy at meeting Rosemarie. When she utters the half-formed sounds of someone who learned speech without hearing it, they say she sounds okay, though maybe a bit foreign. Because the characters are real, these comments aren't at all cruel.

As Rosemarie, Amy Irving, prominent but untapped in Brian DePalma's two most recent films, gives a performance that is both remarkable and irresistible. There is never any doubt about her ability to meet what must have been the enormous demands of the part. Michael Ontkean is good, too, as the aspiring singer who falls in love with her, though the songs written for him by composer Jimmy Webb are syrupy in a way the film manages not to be. At the end, when Rosemarie shows up at the nightclub where Drew is performing, he has learned enough sign language to convey to her the lyrics as he sings. For the rest of us, the music mercifully drowns them out. But this is a minor complaint about a film that is generally touching and beautiful.

(Reviews continued on p. 92)

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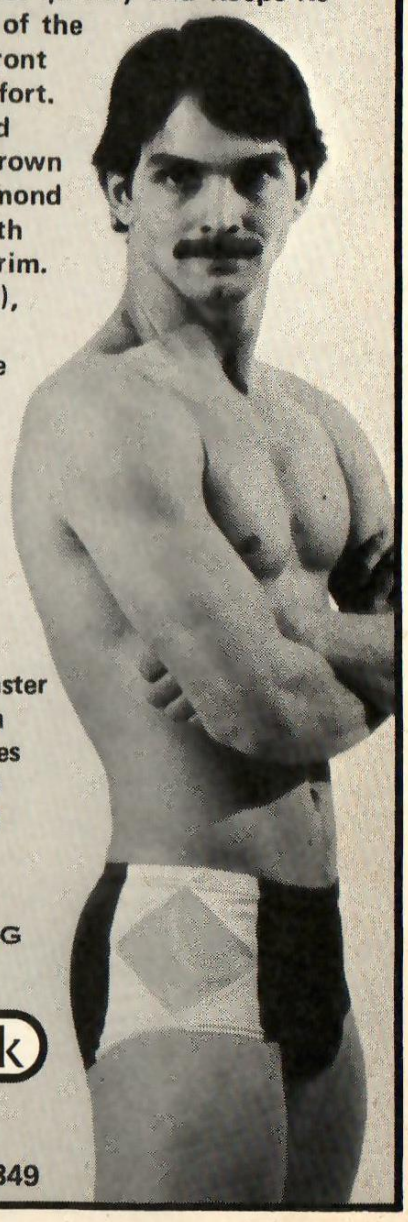

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RECORDINGS

POP

by Chris Huizenga

Hair has become something of a classic even in this age of instant consumption and disposal. But though this musical celebration of the hippie counterculture phenomenon of the 1960s has played the stages of the world for more than 10 years, Milos Forman has now captured the Age of Aquarius on film, and the songs are still vibrant and exciting. In fact, the original motion picture soundtrack album on RCA Records and Tapes is a lot more danceable than previous recordings even though it hasn't been "discoized." The music is presented with a choreographic fluidity that advantageously showcases the vast array of singers who perform on the disc, and the final result is close to perfection. Even though the original energy and impetus of *Hair* have been long dissipated by the apathetic distance of time and change, that special magic of an ideal dawning of personal and social awareness still casts its spell in Forman's film and on this dynamic, double-disc soundtrack.

Francesco Scavullo

On her new Elektra-Asylum album, Hard Times for Lovers, *Judy Collins sings about love, and of course, love lost.*

Judy Collins, a singer identified with the anti-war movement and liberal political causes of the *Hair* decade, has recorded her 17th album for Elektra-Asylum, and it relates as closely to the present time as her earlier songs did to the '60s. Entitled *Hard Times for Lovers*, the album's songs are naturally concerned with love and love's habit of getting lost. Judy's ever-wistful voice suggests depths of joy and despair and that quality of aloneness she can convey even in the midst of 16 tracks of music. The fairly eclectic selection of songs ranges from the old Rodgers and Hart standard "Where or When" to the Hamlisch-Sager theme from the film *Ice Castles*, "Through the Eyes of Love." A good deal of thought and time have gone into this production; it's her first album in a year and a half. The result has a satisfying unity, a consolidation of experience that gives this subtle album considerable power.

Still on the track of the golden oldies from the '60s who are making significant comebacks, we've found a new release by **Dusty Springfield**—*Living Without Your Love*, on United Artists (UALA936H). Her sumptuous voice steeps the music of Smokey Robinson, Melissa Manchester, Barry Gibb, and Carol Bayer Sager with a mellifluous urgency that should please her fans of old and gather new adherents, particularly with her modified disco song, "Save Me, Save Me."

Keith Barrow is a fresh, young voice who marries pop and R&B on his latest Columbia release, *Physical Attraction.* There is a pleasant almost androgynous quality to his voice, which hovers between tenor and soprano but not castrato—an extremely flexible instrument. This is a highly recommended album which has enough variety to satisfy nearly every taste.

They're playing the songs of Marvin Hamlisch and Carol Bayer Sager on the original cast recording of Neil Simon's **They're Playing Our Song**. This musical is a handsome showcase for the talents of Lucie Arnaz and Robert Klein in a comedy about a team of songwriters, who are modeled after the real-life Hamlisch and Sager. Available on Casablanca Records, the album is a fascinating musical dissection of the love-lives of this neurotic pair of music makers.

ROCK

by Ron Baron

While the test tube baby may already be old news to us, **The Tubes**, A&M's outrageous ensemble who transmogrify everything they touch, are back with something new called *Remote Control* (AM-4751). Produced by Todd Rundgren, it's a travesty about the boob tube. The cover depicts a baby who prefers the tube to his mother's boob, and the album offers such hard rockers as "Turn Me On" and the potential hit "No Way Out."

Magnet, produced by Stephen Galfas, is also on A&M (4740), and who'd believe it was recorded in New Jersey? It has a variety of styles, from a Mersey English feel to Top 40 commercial rock, and the cover, showing a girl with an oversized magnet being pulled by the Eiffel Tower, is worth the price of admission. Outstanding cuts by this quintet are "In Love Again," "Bones," "I Don't Want To Lose Your Love," and the would-be hit "Lost In Space."

The Incredible Shrinking Dickies is an LP that may appeal to New Wave/Punk junk enthusiasts, but one which even in its optimistic yellow vinyl will have a hard time taking off. I, however, did not find it hard to take it off the stereo. Busy, frenetic, and phonetic (what language is it recorded in?). Incredible (No) Shrinking (integrity, yes) Dickies (sic). Unless you have a fetish for yellow vinyl, keep away.

Iron Horse (Scotti Bros Records, distr. by Atlantic 7103) has to be good because **Randy Bachman** wrote seven of the songs, produced it, and is featured on vocals and guitar. (Bachman, of course, was a founding member of Guess Who and the Bachman, Turner Overdrive). This heavy metal collection is strongly recommended for those who are partial to the sixties and hate disco. But Iron Horse is not to be confused with Iron Butterfly.

This debut of **Rickie Lee Jones** is so perfect that one wonders just where she has been hiding.

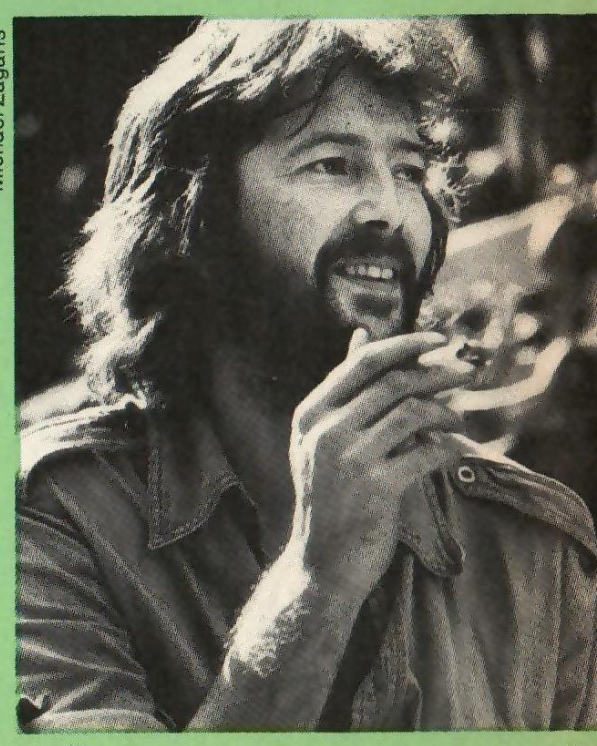
Johnny Gainor, the singing voice behind dozens of commercials, has a new single release, "Got to Know"/"She'll Leave You Cryin' ", on an independent label.

To call this an "auspicious premier" isn't kind enough. She is perhaps the strongest female songwriter-performer discovery of this decade. The album on Warner Bros. Records (3296) is produced by Lenny Waronker and Russ Titelman.

The Vinyl Word

Martin Mull has finished his first comedy LP for Elektra. It's a spoof on the familiar host-show format. One of the circumspect sponsors of the satire is Bun on the Run, the first meatless hamburger franchise....Expect Tom Petty to change labels. Now that ABC Records has been absorbed by MCA, Petty has several companies waving multimillion dollar offers at him.

Michael Zagaris



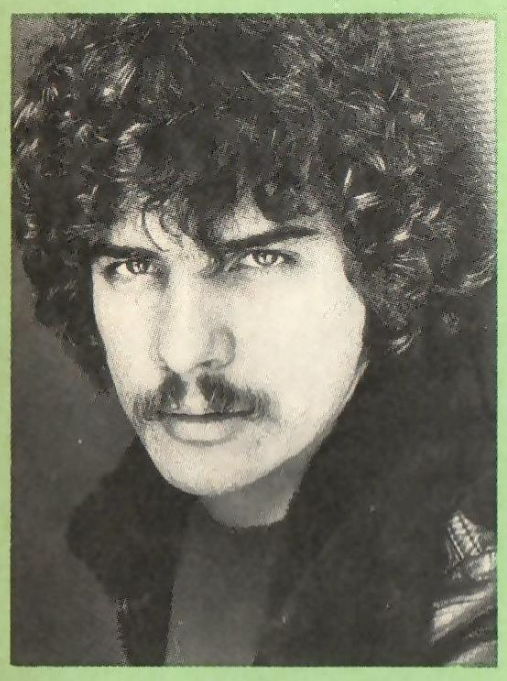
Eric Clapton's latest album on RSO Records is Backless.

CLASSICAL

by John David Richardson

Toodling on the Flute

The great success of French flutist **Jean-Pierre Rampal** as a solo artist has undoubtedly inspired even the lowliest marching band fifer to consider, at least fleetingly, the idea of setting out *solus*. Rampal has long ago recorded—and in many instances re-recorded—the



Ransom Wilson joins with his mentor flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal for an RCA/Erato recording of Three Concertos for Two Flutes, *featuring "I Solisti Veneti" under Claudio Schimone.*

rather limited repertory of major works for flute as well as many of the minor ones. Rampal, however, is not a selfish man. He is an ardent teacher, and, in the case of one student, young **Ransom Wilson**, a collaborator (see *AD*, "Classical Scene," May '76, and Robert Jacobson's "If You've Got It, Flaut It," May '77). In *Three Concertos for Two Flutes* RCA/Erato, ARL1-2713), Rampal and Wilson join with I Solisti Veneti under Claudio Schimone in impeccable performances of Giovanni Battista Viotti's Concerto in A, Christian Ludwig Dieter's Concerto Concertante in D, and François Devienne's Symphonie Concertante in G. These three concertos represent, respectively, the Italian, German, and French schools, but are primarily exercises in 18th-century classical form, are of undeniable charm and are emphatically minor efforts.

James Galway, a plucky Irishman of dubious personal charm (he has been fiercely making the talk-show rounds recently), gave up the first chair with the Berlin Philharmonic to take up the solo challenge. What his playing may lack in elegance is made up for in virtuosity and stamina—truly amazing. His way with two Bach concertos (BWV 1056 and BWV 1059/35) and the Suite No. 2, with I solisti di Zagreb, commands respect (RCA, ARL-2907). Undeniably more popular will be the lollipop disc *Annie's Song and Other Galway Favorites* (RCA, ARL1-3061), which contains tunes ranging from folk music to Mozart and to the John Denver title song. (Galway's wife is named Annie, by the bye, and the album is dedicated to her.)

Pretty **Paula Robison** too has a flair for the flute, as she rightly proves in assaying Handel's complete flute sonatas in the company of harpsichordist Kenneth Cooper and cellist Timothy Eddy (Vanguard, VSD 71229/30, 2 discs). Although I have always thought these sonatas to be schoolboyish (for Handel, at

John Engstead

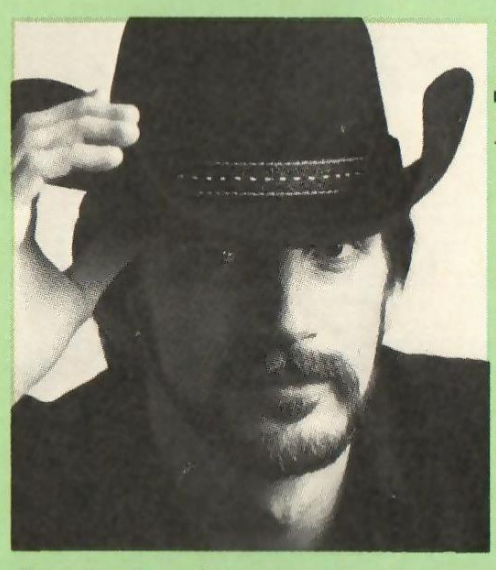
Flutist Paula Robison joins harpsichordist Kenneth Cooper and cellist Timothy Eddy for a recording of Handel's complete flute sonatas on the Vanguard label.

least), it is interesting to compare this recording with the ABC/Seon (ABCL-670005, 3 discs) in which the same music (and more) is performed with "authentic" instruments.

DISCO

by Chris Huizenga

Gino Soccio is the ultimate studio musician; his instrument is the studio itself. Instead of apprenticing himself to an electric guitar, as did his many contemporaries during his young days, Gino learned the masterly manipulation of eight electromagnetic tracks, with enough power to drive two dozen ampli-



Len Tavares

Top DJ Roy Thode, best known for his electric spinning at Fire Island's Ice Palace, is currently in the booth at The Funhouse, New York's newest and largest disco palace.

fiers. Although he had a disco hit, "War Dance," when he was 23, it is on his current album, the debut disc on the new RFC label for Warner Bros., *Outline*, that Gino combines his skill at the control board with those of composing, singing, and playing. The result is almost a new breed of disco, very machine-oriented in its robot measures, very seductive in the clear and emotionless voice that beckons over the tracks. Gino has clearly seen the potential of the hypnotic quality of the disco beat raised to an exponential degree. *Outline* is a remarkable product that offers all music and lyrics, and nearly all the instruments by this young discovery of Ray Caviano of Warners/RFC.

The funkier breed of disco is well represented on the latest album from **First Choice** on Salsoul Records called *Hold Your Horses*, which is also the title song of the smash single enjoying an unreined ride up the disco

First Choice makes history again with their Egyptian-inspired set, which they will tour, promoting their new hit album on Salsoul Records, Hold Your Horses. *Two singles have already emerged as hits, the title cut, "Hold Your Horses," and "Great Expectations."*

charts. Rochelle Fleming, Annette Guest, and Debbie Martin, the newest member of the group, create a heady excitement as they gyrate through their melodies. There's funk and even *pasodobles* on this album, and always music that says dance, dance, dance!

Two special 12-inchers of note are **Linda's Clifford's** disco version of "Bridge Over Troubled Waters" on RSO Records and **John Travolta**'s "A Girl Like You" on Midsong International Records. Both feature the extended sound which defines disco, and assures you that by the time you squeeze onto the dance floor the music that lured you there will still be playing.

Doug Young

Sylvester copped three of the top awards at the Disco Forum V held in NYC recently. Of all the disco acts that performed at Roseland in conjunction with the awards, Sylvester was the only one who performed a totally live show, without taped music which is something of a rarity with a disco act.

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(continued from p. 89)

TV SPOTLIGHT

by Norma McLain Stoop

Francesca Annis stars as Lillie Langtry, the courtesan par excellence who is the subject of a new PBS-TV series "Lillie," which debuted on March 11.

Too Far to Go, the recent two-hour "Theater Special" on NBC-TV, is not only of theatrical film quality, but is far better than many of the long-running feature films. When "Too Far To Go" is repeated, I hope that everyone who missed it in March will see it, for it is exceptionally mature and perceptive. If you've ever lived or visited in the suburbs, chances are you've met Joan and Richard Maple (so brilliantly brought to life by John Updike in 17 of his short stories) keeping house under any number of names. This telling story of a marriage and its breakup is hilarious and heartbreaking. Blythe Danner is quite perfect as Joan, but Michael Moriarty's affected performance is the production's only flaw. Though his casting was a grave error, the power of the honest original stories, William Hanley's tender rendering of them into a moving screenplay with exceptionally fine dialogue, and Fielder Cook's understanding direction setting off Blythe Danner's intelligent and moving performance (which definitely deserves an Emmy nomination) make "Too Far To Go" the best possible kind of dramatic television entertainment.

Lillie, Masterpiece Theatre's new 13-part series, which premiered on PBS March 11, promises to be a smash on the basis of its first and fourth segments. Lilly Langtry is a legend, and this series makes her a *living* legend, lovely and bright, full of energy, and full of that certain charisma that attracts kings and commoners alike, including TV watchers. Francesca Annis is a beautiful and fully understandable Lillie. Anton Rodgers as her bewildered husband, Peter Egan as her great friend Oscar Wilde, and Dennis Lill as the Prince of Wales comprise a wonderful backdrop to the fantastic lady's progress through a fascinating world of the arts, society, and royalty. This series is rewarding whether you tune in at the beginning or at midpoint. It's well worth the flick of the dial.

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Clubs & Concerts

by Pat Wadsley

What becomes a legend most? **Eartha Kitt** recently brought the perfect vehicle for her dynamic vocal and theatrical talents to Les Mouches' stylish cabaret room. With the help of associate producer Alan Eichler and musical director Bert Dovo, Kitt, whose performance record has often been overshadowed by her reputation as an outspoken, acid-tongued firebrand, has dumped the sex symbol numbers which might have suited her 20 years ago, and assembled material around the theme of maturity and survival. (And what are the '70s about if not survival?) But this is not to say that Kitt has mellowed with age, she has only become stronger. Swathed in a multitude of minks and wrapped in a glittery, golden, bugle-beaded Bob Mackie creation, Kitt took the stage and projected the ultimate in assertive attitudes. With arched back, defiantly poised leg, and jutting chin, she set the tone of the show with her opener, the triumphant Sondheim song "I'm Still Here."

Quaffing rivers of champagne, she used her supple animal body and earthy wit to beguile with the "French Charleston." With "Could I Leave You" (" . . . Could I bury my

The interpretive savvy of Debbie Petrino recently galvanized audiences at The Bushes, the cabaret just off of Central Park West.

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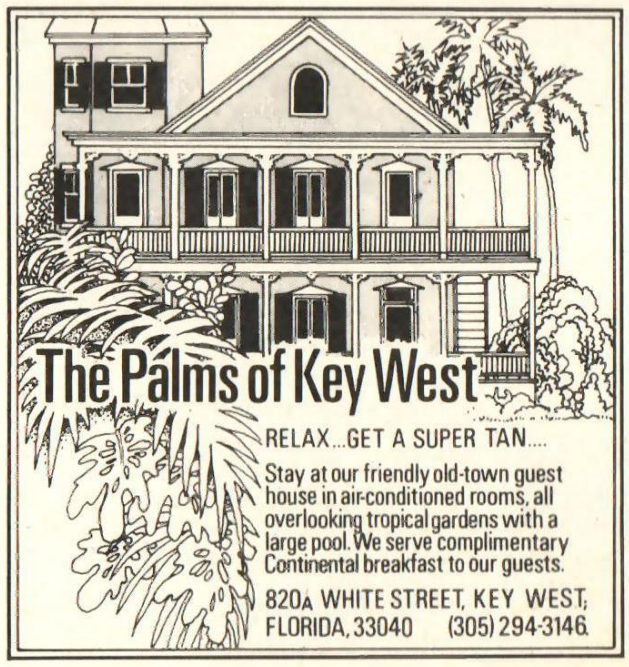

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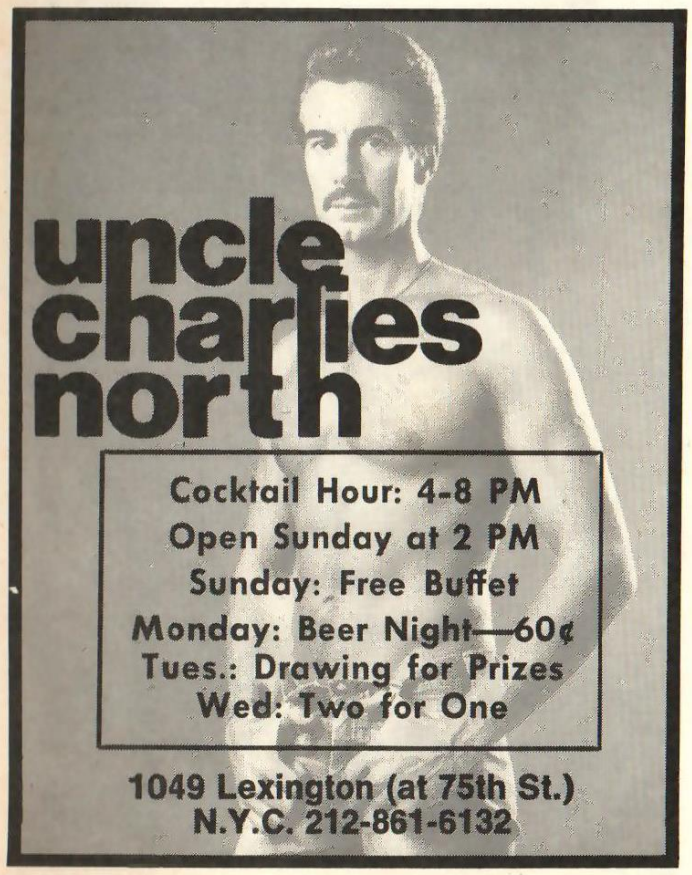
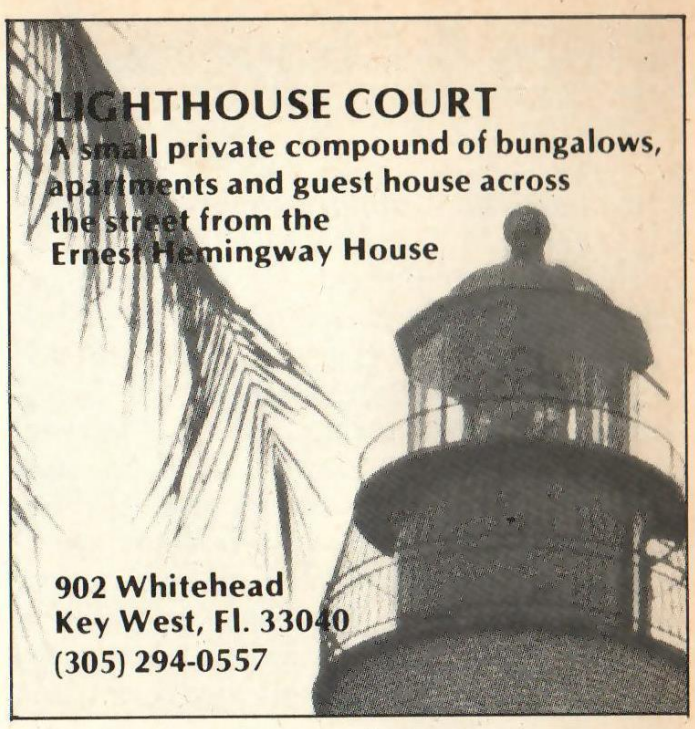


rage with a boy half your age"), she combined her famous cultivated warble with hissed intensity. She added another dimension to Gloria Gaynor's disco declaration "I Will Survive" with expert vocal tension and control. "All by Myself," a stunning poem Kitt herself wrote upon turning 40, is powerfully and poignantly interwoven with the Sayer song. Kitt makes use of her stage setting: a chaise lounge, a screen, a piano, and showers of golden lights to create exquisitely beautiful background tableaux. Eartha, completely in control of her finely tuned vocal instrument, her vast dramatic talent, and her worshipful audience, makes for a thoroughly spellbinding event.

A lady of a different legend, **Geraldine Fitzgerald** is best known for her roles as best friend in some of Hollywood's most beloved films: *Wuthering Heights*, *Dark Victory*, and *Watch on the Rhine*, and most recently on stage in Broadway's *A Touch of the Poet* with Jason Robards. Currently, Miss Fitzgerald (in glorious association with *Ain't Misbehavin'* producer Richard Maltby) has put together a one-woman show of "Street Songs" at the Roundabout Theater. By street songs, Ms. Fitzgerald means those which have been handed down by common people over the years, tunes which mirror popular culture like "Danny Boy" and "The White Cliffs of Dover," which one thought would have the impact of a large yawn. This is not the case with Ms. Fitzgerald's handling of them. Through her witty and animated explanations of their roots, the songs glow as brightly as Fitzgerald herself. We learn that when Noël Coward was asked to write a tune which really was the essence of England, he wrote the very working class "Saturday Night at the Rose and Crown." We find that "Danny Boy" is, instead of merely a sentimental tune of romance, really about the Irish potato famine. Through Fitzgerald's inspired characterizations, we are taken underground during World War II, and led by a feisty Mrs. Creamer in the chins-up "Who's This Geezer Hitler" while bombs destroy the city overhead. Somehow, Fitzgerald's absolute foghorn of a voice becomes completely suited to the beautiful "Argentina" from the musical *Evita*, especially as voiced through London's equivalent to a bag lady, a woman of the streets who sings it as if she has lived every word. Fitzgerald avoids camp, escapes corn, and what is left is glowingly magnetic and mesmerizing entertainment.

The comedy circuit just keeps getting bigger and bigger, and the Grand Finale recently featured **Metropolis**, one of the most innovative and entertaining comedy ensembles around. Metropolis focuses on common, ordinary events like a 19th-century Jewess being possessed by a demon rock musician named Mr. Crud; the largest singles weekend at the Catskills' only spiritual resort, Nirvana, hosted by Swami Shecki Swami Vindaloo, ("I just flew in from Tibet and are my arms tired"); and the happenings at Platonics' Retreat where people go to talk their problems out ("Oh George, I've never seen you looking so verbal.").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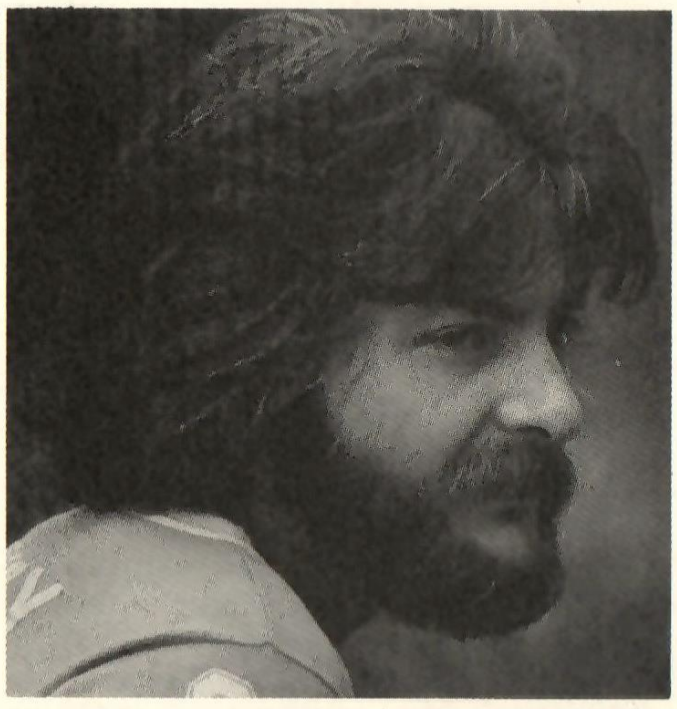
DINING OUT

by Louis Miele

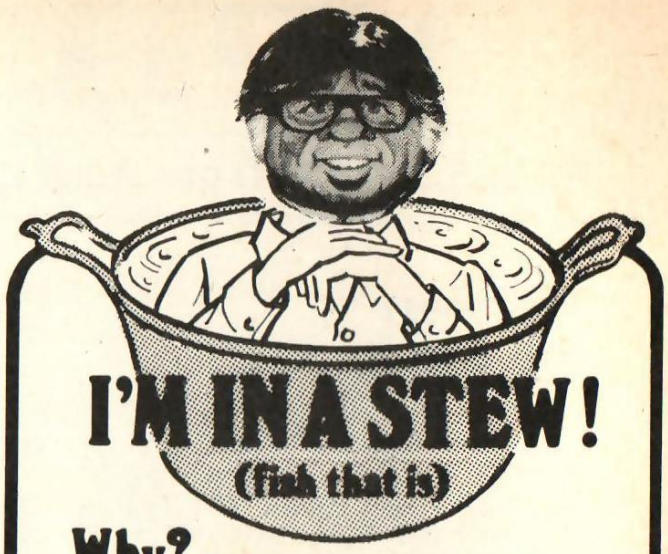
Add **Chequers** to the beautiful new breed of restaurants that are now emerging, looking more like elegant nightclubs than eating emporiums. Situated on the upper East Side of Manhattan at 1420 Third Ave. near East 80th St., the basic American menu offers a fine choice of steaks, chops, and fresh fish. The restaurant is a lush setting of mirrors, blond wood walls, and subdued lighting. After 11 p.m. the back room becomes a disco area Service is excellent and the food is attractively presented. Prices are relatively expensive.



James McGuire

James Haller (along with partners Mark Burke and Gene Brown) has turned the tiny Blue Strawberry Restaurant in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, into a multifaceted enterprise in just a few years. A television cooking class for all ages and the blind, a Blue Strawberry Cookbook (now in its second printing), and the Lee-Fontaine Carriage House Restaurant in Memphis, Tenn., are but a few of the many accomplishments. The dynamic trio are now planning a second cookbook and a restaurant consulting firm.

Once again we return to the East Side where **Bruno**, on 58th St., is now open and happily pleasing customers with a delightful Italian restaurant. Bruno is located on that fabulous restaurant strip between Second and Third Avenues, where there is an abundance of New York's finest and most successful restaurants. The menu is a treasure chest of imaginative Italian dishes. The choice is extensive and tempting. Outstanding is the Linguine con Frutti di Mare, which is a delicious dish of pasta with seafood sauce. As it should be in Italian restaurants, the chef seems to be a wiz with veal dishes. But consistently down the line, Bruno cuisine is top rate. This is a handsome restaurant with an ambiance of informal chic exuding throughout. Dinner for two with cocktails and wine could cost approximately $60.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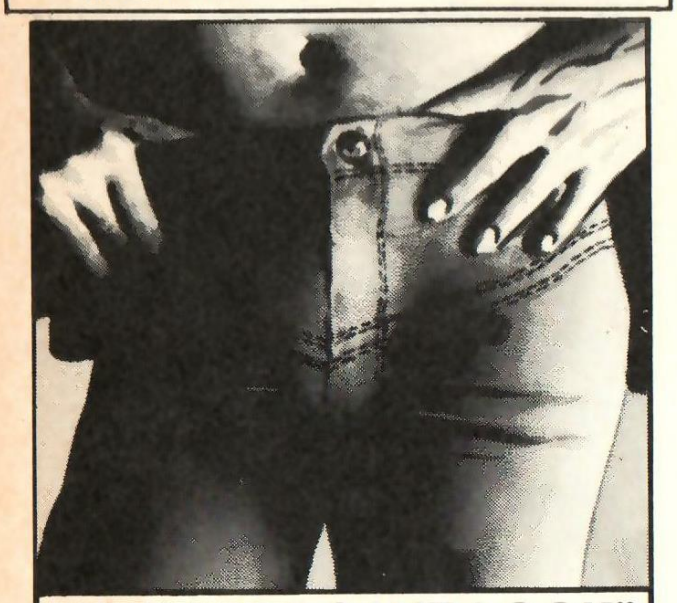

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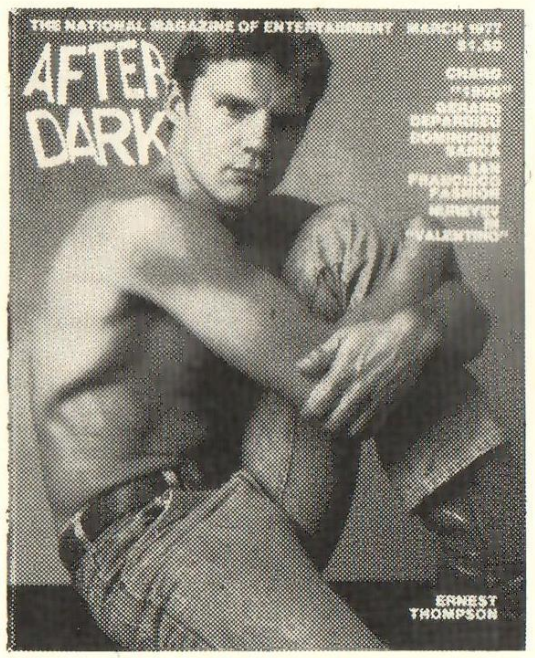

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1976
☐ **AUGUST**
Tab Hunter; Rio; Ronald Reagan
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Dustin Hoffman; Jeanne Moreau; Preston Jones
☐ **NOVEMBER**
"Disco Fever"; Chita Rivera; Cyril Ritchard
☐ **DECEMBER**
Special Issue "Le Nouveau Beau Monde"; Tom Tryon; Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.
1977
☐ **JANUARY**
"A Star Is Born"; "Focus on Film"; Perry King; Carroll Baker
☐ **FEBRUARY**
Arnold Schwarzenneger; Ginger Rogers; Dina Merrill; "Bodybuilding"
☐ **MARCH**
Nureyev in "Valentino"; "1900"; Charo; Ernest Thompson
☐ **APRIL**
Donna Summer; Bernie Taupin; Maurice Bejart; Liz Torres
☐ **MAY**
Mae West; Egon Von Furstenberg; Hamlets
☐ **JUNE**
Montgomery Clift; Nick Nolte/"The Deep"; Tom O'Horgan
☐ **JULY**
Mikhail Baryshnikov; "New York's Wild, Wild West Side; Broadway's Musical Boom
☐ **AUGUST**
Ann-Margret; "Las Vegas"; Mae West Ruby Award Party
☐ **SEPTEMBER**
"The Orient"; Disco 77; Helen Schneider; The King and I
☐ **OCTOBER**
"Turning Point"; Dorothy Loudon; Rudolf Nureyev in "Valentino"; Renata Scotto
☐ **NOVEMBER**
Equus; Jane Fonda and Vanessa Redgrave in "Julia"; Bejart; Gretchen Wyler
☐ **DECEMBER**
Grace Jones; Disco Fashion; Polish Mime; Tyrone Power
1978
☐ **JANUARY**
Key West; Hall & Oates; Silver Screen Couture
☐ **FEBRUARY**
Peter Allen, Hermione Gingold; Fur Fashions; Manhattan Plaza
☐ **MARCH**
Joan Crawford; Seattle; Dracula; Paul Cadmus
☐ **APRIL**
Dolly Parton/Country Western; Grease
☐ **MAY**
SPECIAL TENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE
☐ **JUNE**
SPECIAL DANCE ISSUE
☐ **JULY**
Burt Reynolds; Lucie Arnaz; Circus; Perry King
☐ **OCTOBER**
David Bowie; Jacqueline Bisset; Henry Fonda; Hiram Keller
☐ **DECEMBER**
Ozmania; Joan Crawford; Joe Orton; Dracula
1979
☐ **JANUARY**
"National Narcissism"; Lily Tomlin; John Travolta; Merce Cunningham
☐ **FEBRUARY**
Cher; Michael Bennett's Ballroom; Mia Farrow; "I Love New York story"

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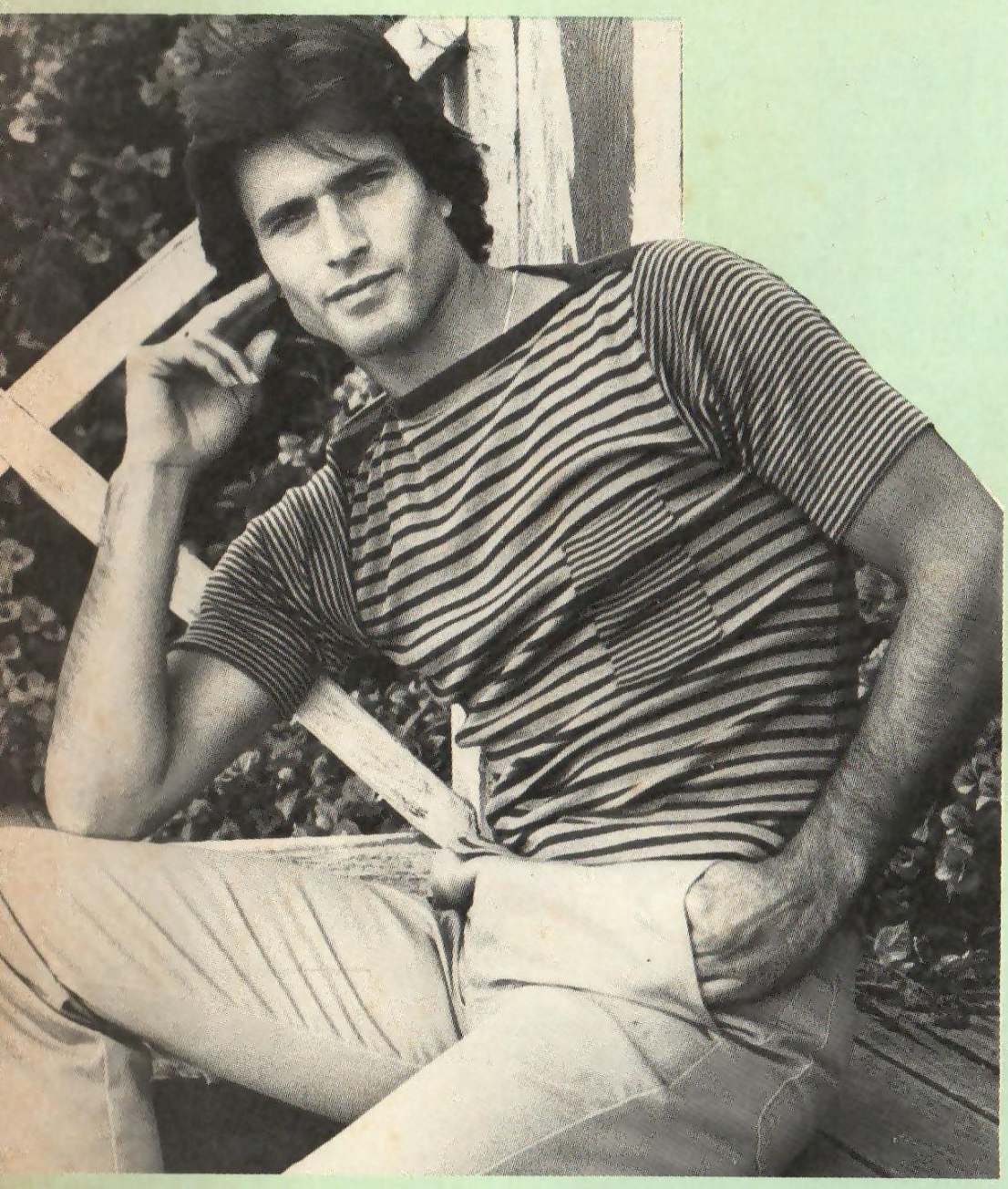

Sun Stripes

For those lazy moments of spring and summer, this **Excello** pullover is the ideal shirt. Designed with a boat neck in camel and green stripes, which are repeated in narrow versions on the sleeves and pocket, it is 100% cotton, and costs approximately $20 at Lord & Taylor and Gimbels stores.

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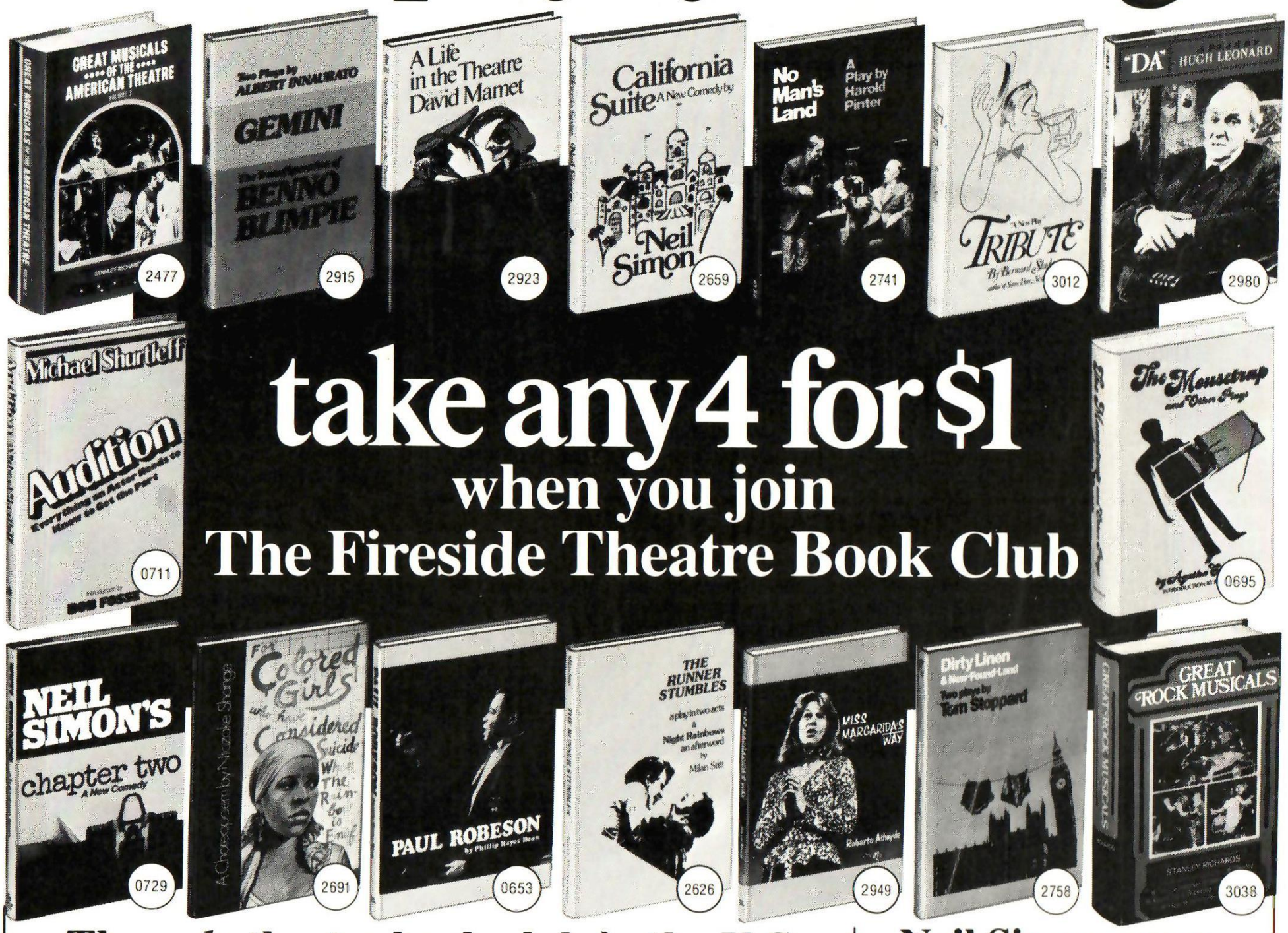
If the play's your thing



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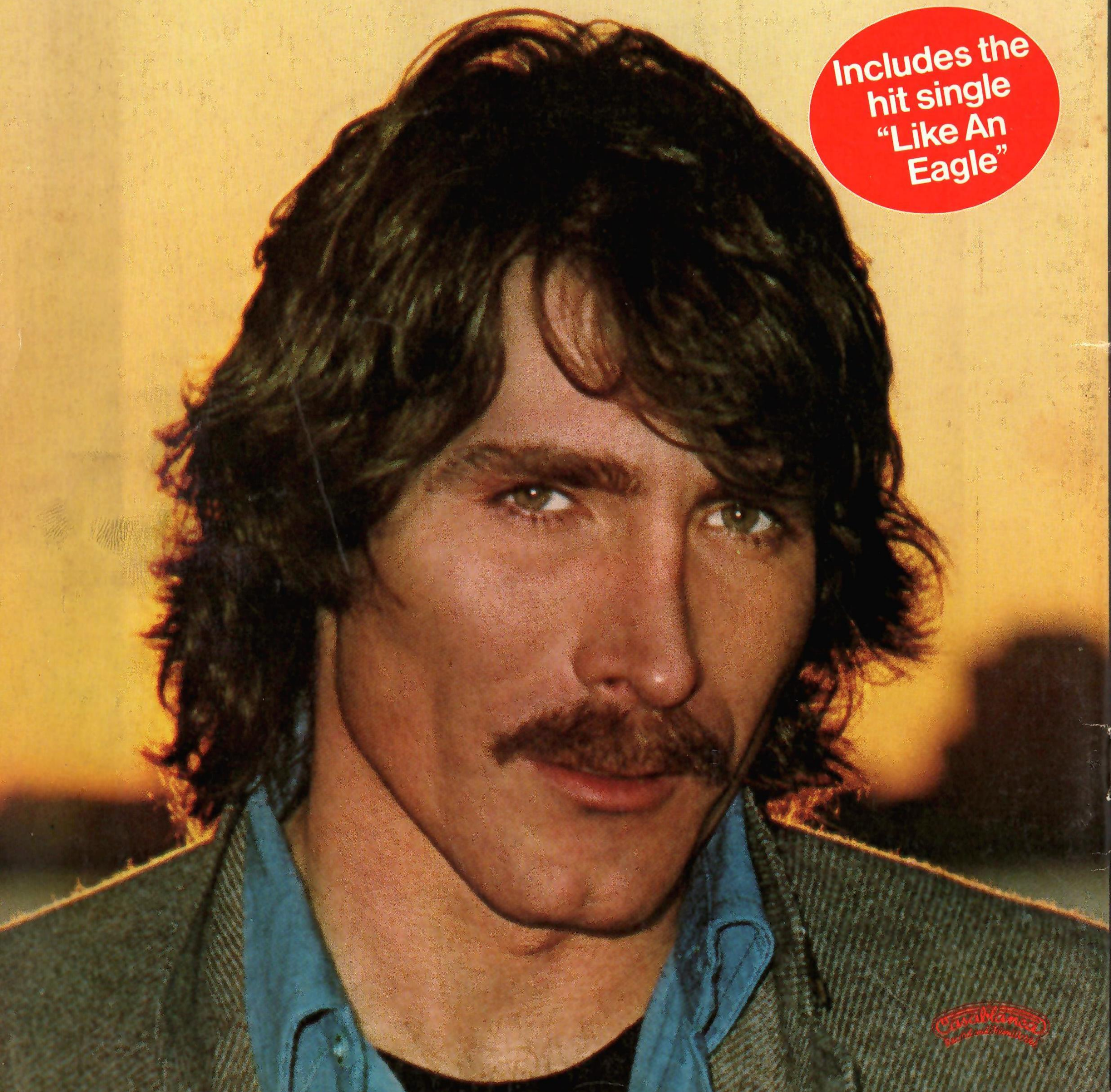
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